

# fifth estate

Fall 2017

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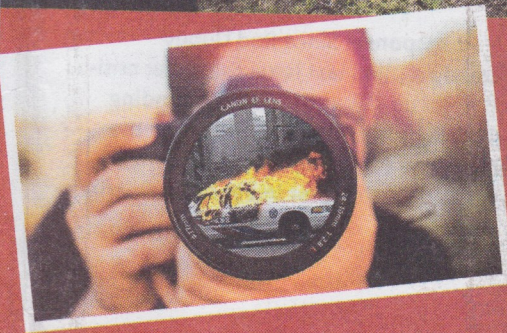
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# LETTERS **Our readers respond**

Send letters to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org) or Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220  
All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten; letters may be edited for length

## REBELLION CELEBRATION?

I moved to Detroit recently from the suburbs, but wasn't even born when the 1967 Rebellion occurred.

I appreciated your coverage in the Summer 2017 *Fifth Estate* which had a much better analysis than what appeared in the local corporate media.

(See "How White Supremacy Progresses: Fifty Years of Lessons from Detroit 1967," by Frank Joyce.)

It was, indeed, a revolt against brutal, racist police and an economic system structured to assure that people of color remained on the bottom rung of the ladder.

As many observers have noted, the uprising shouldn't have come as a surprise. How much can people take?

Although much of what has transpired publicly has given recognition to the underlying causes of the Rebellion, there is also an unmistakable celebration of it as a positive reaction to repression and discrimination.

I was at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History that presented a number of important events about the Rebellion, but also t-shirts were offered saying, "Detroit Rebellion 1967," like it had been a rock concert. Among lots of people, there was an observable sense of pride that the lowest had struck a blow at the highest.

Outside of the museum there are large illuminated panels giving a short-hand history of those days in July and what has happened in the city since. The latter is presented much rosier than what your writer describes.

One panel gives the statistics of the Rebellion: "43 deaths, 1,189 injuries, 2,509 stores looted or burned, 388 families displaced, 3,034 fires."

However you want to label what happened in 1967, the toll borne by an already ravished community suggests that this Rebellion was defeated, producing a disaster whose results continue today.



Commemorated, yes, for an understanding of white supremacy and how it continues, but no to a celebration.

**Alan Cunningham**  
Detroit

**Frank Joyce responds:** The letter writer makes an interesting point. But my interpretation is different.

The trench warfare over the message offered by the Detroit 67 Anniversary/Industrial Complex was intense. The Charles Wright Museum very deliberately used the word rebellion as opposition to white dominated institutions such as the Detroit Historical Museum which preferred riot, civil unrest, etc.

I don't think the intention was to suggest "rock concert" comparisons at all.

## Very Glib

I've been reading FE on and off the entire 15 years I've been an anarchist and generally appreciate the range of topics, the depth of discourse, and the broad expressions of anarchism.

It is because of this appreciation that I want to express my disappointment at the inclusion of "Cultural Appropriation and Shaming: Dreads & Mohawks: To Whom Do They Belong," by Rod Dubey in your Winter 2017 edition.

I found the article to be very glib and lacking in the presentation of new and

engaging ideas. I really am excited to have uncomfortable conversations, and believe it is important to discuss nuance, especially around heated topics. In fact, I dedicate much of my life to facilitating heated conflicts and conversations among anarchists and radicals.

However, this article presented simple arguments that don't seem to respect or acknowledge the vast amount of engagement that anarchists have been having around the nuance of cultural appropriation and how we do or don't name it and face it.

While I agree that shaming tends to do nothing to actually shift power structures or face harm and conflict, there are reasons the stakes are so high in discussing these things.

There are generations of historical trauma, and in moments when the ongoing pain and history are illuminated, whatever ways we do or don't show up have the potential to either heal or pour salt on those very old wounds.

So, why include an essay that simplistically compares cultural heritage and ancestral knowledge to capitalist concepts of private property? This author had the audacity to suggest that naming real systemic racist harm would "insist on racial divides," as if calling it like it is makes it worse.

Fifth Estate, you have a great reputation and generally good editorial practices. Use your power responsibly and let's have these hard conversations in public.

**From occupied Ohlone land,**  
Mars Goetia

**FE response:** Since Rod Dubey already replied last issue to similar criticism, let us say, at the risk of sounding glib, we didn't think the article did the things you object to, and did do what you said you look for in our essays—crit-

Continued on Page 46



## Solidarity & Mutual Aid

Solidarity and Mutual Aid, two anarchist bedrock principles, are being tested in the real world with the rise of the fascist right.

Although small in numbers, they have gained social and political space as the result of the election of Donald Trump.

We, like many others, pledge they will find no home, no safe haven from which to spread their toxic message of racism and authoritarianism. We will also defend ourselves and at-risk populations from the physical and political threat they pose.

As serious as openly expressed fascism is, it is not the most virulent and damaging form of white supremacy. Killer cops murder more black men in a year than the Klan has in a generation.

The racism advocated by neo-Nazis pales when compared to that which is embedded in every institution of this society.

Fascists display violent behavior and odious slogans in Charlottesville and other places. At the same time in Detroit, tens of thousands of African Americans' homes are stolen by city tax foreclosures, and similar numbers have their water shut off.

We need to confront the fascists at every point where they raise their poisonous heads, but without losing sight of where the font of oppression lies—in capitalism and the state.

## Fifth Estate

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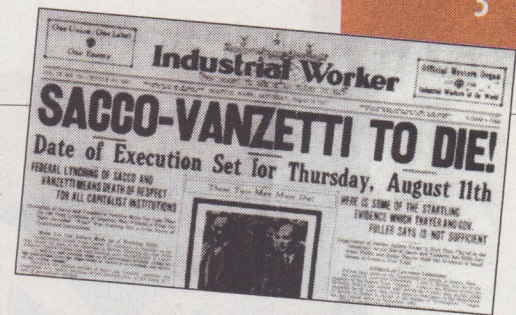
## ANARCHO-SHORTS

### Anniversary of Judicial Murder of Anarchists

2017 marks 90 years since the judicial murders of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who were tried and convicted for the crime of being anarchists and immigrants.

In 1920, the two were arrested in a Boston suburb and charged with a payroll robbery during which a paymaster and his guard were shot dead. It was a time of intense state and corporate propaganda aimed at demonizing radicals and, similar to today, targeting immigrants as responsible for U.S. societal problems.

In 1921, in a trial marked by profound



prejudice and manipulations, Sacco and Vanzetti were found guilty and sentenced to death.

The frame-up, sham trial and sentence of capital punishment outraged people of many political orientations in the U.S. and around the world. As appeals failed one by one, the popular protest grew, but the state was not to be stopped in its vendetta against the anarchist immigrants.

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) frequently published articles about Sacco and Vanzetti's case in their paper, the *Industrial Worker*, and for

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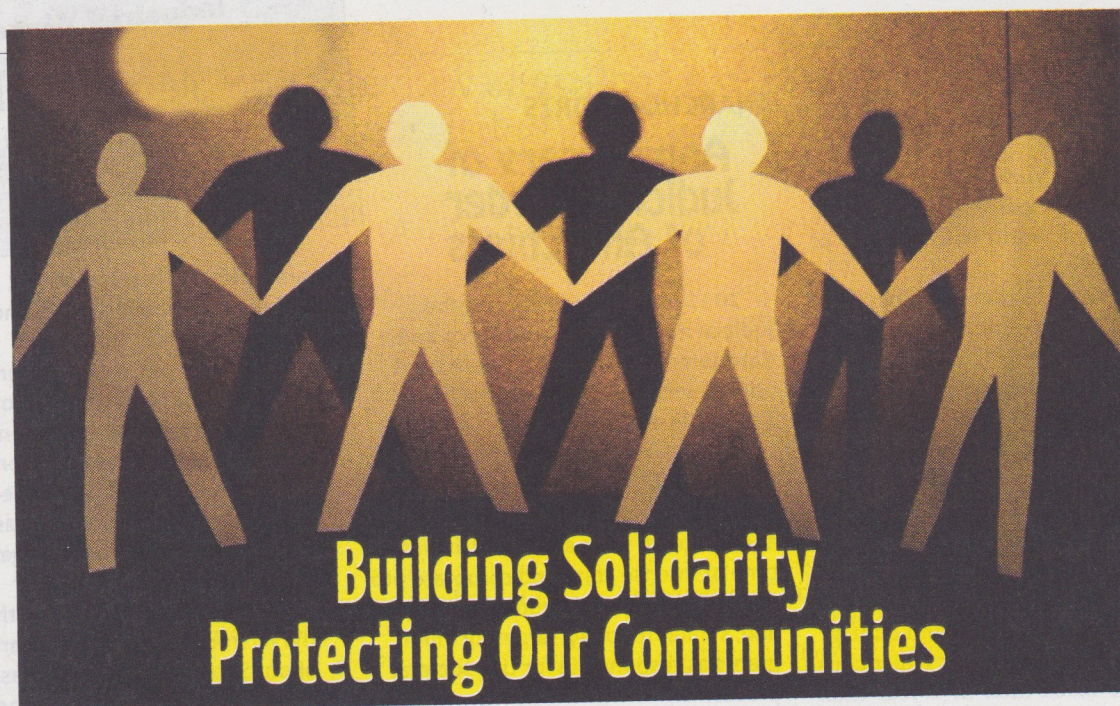
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## Opposing the Rise of the Far-right

RUI PRETI

**T**hese are anarchistic times—times in which increasing numbers of people are resisting the horrors of contemporary society by engaging in direct action without waiting for leaders to tell them what to do.

So, it is no surprise that anarchists are once again at the center of fights against the capitalist system and the subjugation of the many to the will of the few.

Donald Trump's rise to national prominence and power has ushered in a marked increase in visible far-right expressions of racism and other bigotry, as well as white supremacist individual violent attacks and ominous para-military militia activities. From 2016 on, there has been a fivefold increase of reported hate crimes.

However, according to a recent estimate, they represent less than half of those that occur. Many hate crime victims understandably hesitate to inform police for a variety of reasons, and often local law enforcement agencies don't file hate crime reports with the FBI's central database which issues the official national figures.

Many—although far from all—of these incidents have occurred at colleges and universities across the country as far-right groups seek to recruit new members. In several instances, their hate-filled speeches and rallies, and the distribution of propaganda have been accompanied or followed by attacks resulting in injuries and even deaths of those opposing them.

But there has also been a significant increase in oppositional activities by people from a variety of racial and ethnic

backgrounds, diverse genders, ages, disabilities, unemployed and those with well paying jobs.

Between January 20, 2017, the day Trump was inaugurated, and the time of this writing (mid-August), thousands of protests have taken place in the US. Highway blockages, pipeline resistance and sabotage, disruption of Trump and white supremacist/neo-fascist rallies, parades, sit-ins, airport occupations, and other manifestations have been increasing in numbers and size.

This highly energized resistance has been largely the creation of horizontal self-organization in the spirit of broadly non-authoritarian principles.

Anarchists, socialists, communists and progressives cooperating together as anti-fascists (antifa) are working within local communities to aggressively disrupt far-right and white supremacist activities and influence.

**T**he intent is threefold. First and foremost, they are determined to drive hate-mongers out of public spaces and off college campuses to protect those most likely to be targets of their vicious attacks.

Second, they are directly challenging the bigotry and lies of these dangerous far-right groups in order to discredit them and block their recruiting attempts.

Third, they have the goal of making it difficult if not impossible for such hateful expression to be readily available publicly, thereby reducing the poisonous influence of such



## How can anarchists engage in coalitions with left-liberals and leftists without having their energies subverted or absorbed into reformist activities?

groups and individuals and stifling their ability to normalize their heinous ideas.

Much of antifa activity focuses on research, writing and distributing educational and agitational literature, as well as speaking in a variety of educational contexts. However, they also see as ethically justifiable, militant and even violent actions against racists and other bigots who aim at hurting vulnerable people and radicals.

The strong opposition to far-rightists is certainly encouraging. But it is necessary to consider some problematic aspects.

For example, while anarchistic ideas and ways of organizing are at the heart of the current resistance against the far-right, anarchist groups and individuals are still in the minority.

In this context, it is relevant to consider the pitfalls as well as the positive aspects of anarchists collaborating in ad hoc coalitions with left-liberal and leftist organizations, particularly authoritarian ones, while people are in the process of developing the capacity to take control of their own lives.

One important unresolved consideration is how anarchists can engage in coalitions with left-liberals and leftists without having their energies subverted or absorbed into reformist activities that such groups promote, activities which might take the focus away from the fight for a society based on mutual aid, solidarity, and individual freedom.

And, how might this impact horizontal self-organization and even divert energies into support for specific parties, aspirants to power, and government functionaries, and away from forcefully opposing all the other aspects of this old world that block the way to a new one?

While working for immediate relief from the repressive institutions of capitalism and the state, it is imperative that anarchists prioritize conversations about developing actual egalitarian alternatives to the police, the courts and prisons, as well as more pro-active community self-defense, protection of demonstrations and of threatened individuals.

These are important considerations as increasing numbers of people mobilize to protest against the growing number of far-right and neo-fascist events being held throughout the country.

Many far-right events have resulted in injuries and even deaths on or in close proximity to campuses, such as at the University of Washington in Seattle (UW) in January, and the University of Virginia at Charlottesville in August.

All too many liberal and even some leftist and anarchist commentators have followed the far-right in framing the story of the injuries and deaths as nasty protesters facing off against nasty rightists, in order to claim or imply that the militant actions of protesters were at least partly responsible for the actions of the rightist aggressors.

This kind of framing of the story is similar to the nor-

malization of far-right activities that has been taking place elsewhere.

Many people involved with peaceful anti-rightist activities, such as teach-ins, theater performances, rallies, and postering, have been subsequently targeted by ultra-rightists with rape and death threats, character defamation, and publicizing of personal and family information to enable more vicious attacks.

All of this has continued for months via the internet and social media, as well as through phone messages and direct threats in classes and other places on and off campus. The situation has become so acute that students and faculty from several colleges and universities are joining together to form the Campus Antifascist Network, a broad, campus-based countermovement.

Anarchists have a long and honorable history of fighting for freedom of expression as part of struggling for a society that prioritizes solidarity and social justice. Unlike liberals, they understood from early on that the state cannot be a neutral protector and regulator.

Anarchists also generally reject as a gross distortion the liberal belief in competition in the market place of ideas as a mechanism for eliminating bad ideas while strengthening good ones.

Throughout U.S. history, whenever groups demanding social justice and liberation expressed themselves in affective ways, the government exercised both repression and recuperation to silence and subdue them.

This was true when the socialist and anarchist labor movements began growing in the 1880s, when the Industrial Workers of The World, and anarchist and socialist groups were on the rise during the first decades of the 20th century, when various movements for social justice and liberation were gathering strength during the 1960s, and again in the 21st century up to the present.

As economic and political power shifts between different factions, the structure of power remains intact and the state is used to promote the dominant faction's perspectives.

Far-right speech and other forms of expression should be understood not as neutral, but for what they are—incitement to dangerous activities with potentially lethal consequences:

There is no reason to expect that the police or other agents of the state will protect vulnerable people or anyone else against bigoted groups today any more than they did in the past. Luckily, over the past two decades anarchists have been accumulating many of the skills and resources that can be used imaginatively for this struggle.

But it is important to remember that anti-fascist activities are based on coalitions of groups and individuals who may or may not always agree on methods or goals. With this in mind,



it is necessary to ask:

How can anarchists maintain an emphasis on challenging far-rightists, white supremacists and other authoritarians, while leaving the way open to ideas and activities of diverse non-authoritarians?

How can bottom-up egalitarian activity be strengthened so as to broaden resistance to the far-right?

How can far-right violence be effectively countered without creating its mirror image or giving that impression to those not part of antifa?

How do people figure out when direct confrontation and fighting is advantageous and when this would work against the main goal of empowering the community to defend itself?

Despite the right's attempts to assert otherwise, counter-protesters (including antifa) in Charlottesville on August 11 and 12 were generally able to tackle most of these issues in very constructive ways.

Going forward, anti-fascist community self-defense needs to be balanced with a recognition of the problematic role of arbiter of acceptable communications, and an understanding of the importance of freedom of expression as the basis of an anarchistic society.

An anti-fascist response to the far-right needs to be combined with a positive anarchistic vision of the possibilities which point to the kind of society we want and are working on creating.

For updates on the University of Washington shooting case, check:

Greater Seattle IWW General Defense Committee Local 24, [greaterseattleigdc.com/](http://greaterseattleigdc.com/)

For more information on anti-fascist resistance to the far-right on campuses check out:

[palumboliu.tumblr.com/post/164183139515/join-the-campus-antifascist-network](http://palumboliu.tumblr.com/post/164183139515/join-the-campus-antifascist-network)

Rui Preti is a long-time friend of the *Fifth Estate* and a great believer in the value of continuous questioning.

**If You Move  
Don't forget to send a change  
of address**

# Defending Ourselves

**Self-defense based on mutual aid & solidarity**



**JEFF SHANTZ**

**T**he rising tide of fascism and organized political violence of the Right, particularly the mobilization of street-level right-wing forces, such as the Proud Boys and the Oathkeepers, have returned the question of self-defense to the center of anarchist and antifascist concerns. This has become more burning following the brutal fascist mobilization and violence in Charlottesville, Virginia in August. The murder there of Heather Heyer by a neo-Nazi gives the issue of self-defense life or death importance.

The present period demonstrates the inescapable necessity of anarchists engaging in self-defense training. But it also shows that this is insufficient if it remains on an individual basis. The current context of rising tides of alt-right threats underscores the need for self-defense on a collective and organized basis of mutual aid and solidarity.

There are already some forms of collective defense anarchists can draw on. One of the most familiar among anarchists in recent years has been the Black Bloc tactic. It originated as a means for countering fascists and police in Germany in the 1980s, where it provided crucial defense for squats that were subject to disruption or attack by both.

Obviously, the Black Bloc in North America has been highly effective in street demos and protests. But it does not translate directly to regular, day-to-day neighborhood defense. Wearing a mask or black bandana is not the best way to introduce



## Reliance on reactive or spontaneous defense is often the case in antifascist actions today, carried out through quick responses to the fascists.

or ingratiate yourself to your neighbors. The anonymity that is necessary in street demonstrations is counter-productive, even self-defeating, in the context of building neighborhood solidarity and protection.

Anarchist organizing against fascists and white supremacist groups in the period from the 1980s through the early 2000s was largely carried out by Anti-Racist Action (ARA), founded in Minneapolis. ARA groupings were active in numerous cities in North America.

ARA was organized largely as a reactive street fighting force of anti-racists who were willing to take risks confronting fascists when they gathered publicly or at events like concerts. Though not regimented and trained militarily as a fighting force for self-defense, ARA was made up of committed people ready to fight to break up public fascist presence. While some members of ARA practiced martial arts, it was not always the case that ARA as a whole did systematic training. Nor did they organize on the basis of ongoing defense formations. Action tended to be spontaneous and reactive.

Reliance on reactive or spontaneous defense is often the case in antifascist actions today, carried out through quick responses to the fascists. In free-for-all assaults on them such as frontal charges, there is little strategic or tactical preparation or discipline.

Over the years, there have been various projects for martial arts training among anarchist and antifascist activists, spaces, and communities. At the Anarchist Free Space and Free Skool in Toronto, this was provided along with classes on anarchism. Notably, there was some sense among Free Skool participants and collective members that the martial arts courses were less necessary or relevant than theoretical and historical ones.

For some anarchists, another self-defense practice takes the form of Copwatch patrols. Copwatching involves organized surveillance—grassroots observation from below of authorities as opposed to the top down surveillance by authorities.

In Surrey, near Vancouver, we have initiated copwatching crews to record, document, and publicize the violent actions of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officers and City bylaw enforcement officers against homeless people. As these actions have been publicized, police have changed their actions considerably, becoming less abusive. At least one bylaw enforcement officer has been canned.

### A BASIS FOR DEFENSE

The structural basis for a defense organization is already provided by the example of the labor flying squad utilized by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A defense force on these lines could be mobilized quickly through a phone list accessible to all members.

Not only does it allow for quick deployment, it also builds on pre-existing relationships of trust and action. Members know each other and have important experiences working together during political actions, protests, and/or workplace strikes and pickets. They also typically have relationships of activity and trust with people in other social movements and community organizations, such as anti-poverty or migrant defense groups. Such was the case in Toronto with various, both union-based and autonomous flying squads and relationships with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty.

Training can be extended throughout a given community or neighborhood, thus providing spaces and practices of solidarity building. On a larger basis they can provide alternatives to statist intrusions on communities. Doing so would involve developing self-defense on a broad, more regular, community basis.

### SELF-DEFENSE AND MUTUAL AID

Community self-defense is an important expression of mutual aid, the basic anarchist impulse and organizing principle.

Solidarity on this basis moves beyond dependence on the state for protection or response to crisis. It helps people develop relationships, skills, and confidence to support community members rather than turning to the authorities. It also helps break the reflex response of looking to the state to address social problems or threats.

Anarchists should not have illusions they can satisfactorily meet community needs for protection at this point. There is much work to be done and many cities with anarchist movements have minimal self-defense capacities. This is a real challenge to anarchists.

It is impossible to speak meaningfully of alternatives to the state and to provide compelling evidence to people that anarchism offers something of a realistic or practical alternative if these resources and capacities are not developed. It does not provide a bridge from the current state of affairs to anarchism if such needs cannot be met in an anarchic manner.

And it leaves people unconvinced. This is not to say that full self-defense capacities must be achieved. But more work needs to be done to approach an effective and compelling level of community care.

Self-defense efforts offer an important means for bringing non-anarchists into relationships with anarchists. People will become involved in protective efforts against fascists and/or against police violence even if they have not identified themselves as, or will not ever see themselves as, anarchists.

Jeff Shantz is an anarchist community organizer in Surrey, British Columbia. His web site is [jeffshantz.ca](http://jeffshantz.ca).



# Right-Wing Sets Agenda; Liberals Join In Antifa Under Attack from “Many Sides” & Doxxing

FIFTH ESTATE STAFF

Coming out of antifa smashups with fascists, in Charlottesville and Berkeley in August, condemnation of those physically fighting the alt-right has given new life to Trump's charge that “many sides” are responsible for

anarchist and left-wing web sites—creates political space for the Trump regime to continue prosecutions that began with the 200-plus activists facing up to 80 years for DisruptJ20 Inauguration Day actions. We can expect more indictments. (See FE #398, Summer 2017 and page 27 in this issue).

Many social democrats and liber-

als played a similarly odious role in the 1950s during the Red Scare era when, in order to prove how patriotic they were, they took part in the demonization of people associated with the Communist Party.

Although the

CP was more than worthy of criticism for its political treachery toward other tendencies, some on the left eagerly joined the Red hunters with books, articles, loyalty oaths, and even denounced political dissenters during House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) congressional hearings.

Tens of thousands of the accused lost their jobs in schools, universities, industry, and businesses and a political climate of generalized repression was created, setting back civil rights and labor campaigns.

Antifa activists explain that their work is less physical confrontation and more research and exposure efforts, generally known as doxxing. Exposing fascists to their employers and neighbors can result in job loss and public

shaming for their racist views.

Reading about a neo-Nazi getting bounced out of their job at a Berkeley hot dog stand delighted most on the left, but this is very reminiscent of what happened to those on the left in the 1950s.

Is it too difficult to imagine the shoe being on the other foot with anarchists losing their jobs and being held with disdain on a mass scale? And, the far-right is currently employing the same technique against its anarchist and left-wing opponents, but rather than shaming and job loss, they use it to spread misinformation by setting up fake antifa sites, hacking antifa and other sites, spreading private information, and creating campaigns of sexual and racial harassment by phone, text, email, and in person.

Even if antifa activists were to cease their doxxing activities, it's doubtful that the right would. So, it's best to think about protection, a difficult undertaking when hacking skills are so widespread.

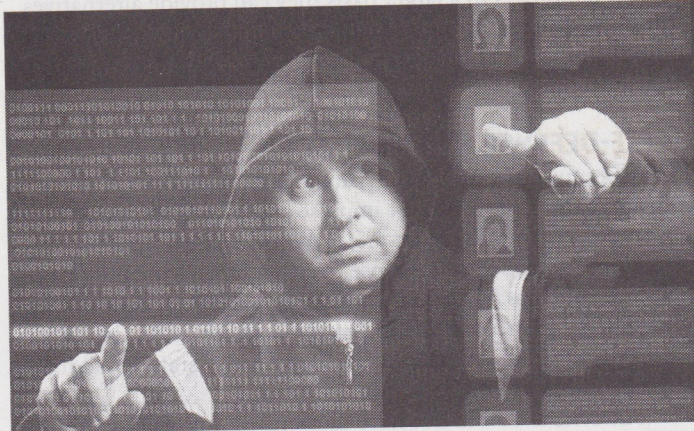
Medium, an online publishing platform, provides an extensive guide to safeguard your electronics, yourself, and our communities. Extensive is an understatement, but at least some of it should be adhered to as a precaution. Search for “anti-doxing guide for activists.”

The situation we face in combating the neo-fascists of today has some haunting resemblances to the past. In 1939, 22,000 supporters of the German-American Bund, modeled on the German Nazi party, jammed New York's Madison Square Garden while 100,000 people assembled outside in opposition.

A protester attempted to attack the U.S. would-be Führer, Fritz Kuhn, as he stood at the podium, but was beaten down by bodyguards. The *New York Times* denounced “violent anti-Nazi protesters.”

Recognizing the similarities and differences between past and present is an important part of figuring out how to oppose today's threats.

The Trump regime's labeling anti-fascists “domestic terrorists” needs to be understood as their testing how far they can go in curtailing dissent. It must be strongly criticized and opposed.



violence at anti-fascist actions.

And, some on the left are contributing to this.

While much has been written for and against antifa, it is important to understand why this topic has risen to the point where it is fodder for furious denunciation by late night television hosts, hip liberal magazines, and the Democratic Party.

Trump, Fox News, and the far-right have set the talking points and liberals and social democrats are eager to show they are not extreme, they don't like to see people beaten up, even the worst racists, and ultimately they're good citizens who believe in non-violence.

The right's success in demonizing antifa activists in the eyes of the general population—people who don't read



## Building a collective community defense of our demonstrations & meetings

chosen behavior and can be effective in some situations and campaigns. A physical response to an attack has some genetically coded tripwires, but utilizing it effectively needs to be learned.

The key element here is training. I had practiced martial arts for years in which stick fighting was one component. It was done in classes that were specifically established for training us in defense against right wing attacks.

We began in a class taught by a high-ranking black belt, a Korean from Seoul who had been on his country's national police force, and who bragged to us about beating up protesting students, having no idea that we were American equivalents of his targets.

On the wall of his training room he displayed crossed U.S. and South Korean flags to which he insisted we execute a bow of respect each time we entered his studio. We dealt with this by folding our hand in the crease of our bow which was giving a middle-finger salute. The class was taught very formally and rigorously, with achieving belts of rank a major goal.

We eventually decided to form our own class with a black belt friend as instructor and while most of the formalities were dropped, the rigor continued. Although we enjoyed the camaraderie and the building of martial skills very few of us previously possessed, our practice was not done with the intent of gaining individual self-defense skills, but rather building a collective community defense of our demonstrations and meetings.

Having an organized defense guard is nothing new to revolutionary or labor movements, particularly ones which anticipate armed assaults from either the government or right wing.

IN SPAIN, THE REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST labor union, the CNT, had its own militia and fielded armored vehicles during its fight against fascism in the 1930s. However, before the Revolution and Civil War broke out in 1936, CNT locals were often under as-

Antifa mobilized in Charlottesville, Virginia, Aug. 12

## In Defense of Self-Defense

### Thoughts on violence & martial arts

PAUL WALKER

**THWACK!** My fighting stick landed exactly where I aimed it—diagonally across the face of a fascist who was trying to rip down a banner a friend and I were holding, to which the stick was attached.

The blow struck him with such velocity that it snapped his head back while a rosette of blood gushed forth from his broken nose and split lips intermingled with a piece of a tooth and broken lenses from his glasses.

It wasn't a lucky blow. It was executed with intent and exact precision—waist and hips rotating, arms and shoulder following, right hand gripping the pole upwards, left hand down. I charitably did not bring the opposite end of the six-foot pole up into his crotch.

The blow was delivered during an environmental protest to protect myself and others around the banner from right wingers who had a long history of violent attacks against activists. In a larger melee that followed, two more rightists attacked me, and other demonstrators came to my defense. We suffered only a minor injury and no arrests.

Lest this sound like a recounting solely for purposes of violence porn (admit it; almost all of us like to hear tales of fascists getting their asses kicked like when white nationalist Richard Spencer got punched on Inauguration Day), we can look at the specifics of what is above and how it relates to questions of self-defense.

This article is only about repelling attacks and not about offensive actions against the right. Most organisms defend themselves reflexively. Pacifism is



sault from employers' associations who hired thugs to attack strikers and terrorize members.

The Spanish workers fought back with designated union members becoming *pistoleros*, armed men whose exclusive duty was to protect the other workers by force of arms. Their workmates pooled their wages to provide for the families of the ones who stood guard or exacted penalties against those who acted on behalf of the bosses.

The most well known *pistoleros* were anarchists Buenaventura Durruti, who later led a militia unit, and Francisco Ascaso, who died on the barricades in Barcelona on the first day of the fight against the fascist uprising in July 1936. Although hundreds of other men served in this capacity to protect their comrades, the exploits of these two are particularly interesting.

**VISIBLE ARMAMENTS, WHETHER GUNS OR FIGHTING STICKS,** have the drawback of bringing the attention of the police who are increasingly less tolerant of armed antifa as the demonization of anti-fascist forces is currently taking place. A contingent of black clad men and women carrying poles will probably not be considered well by the cops. Prior to demonstrations, police in many cities such as Seattle, have confiscated anarchist and antifa's sticks, signs, and other self-defense items while not subjecting rightists to the same enforcement.

Training is key to military dominance. Right wingers are heavily into martial arts, weight lifting, and weaponry; many are ex-military, so the bravery of the antifa comrades in confronting them is particularly admirable, and often surprisingly successful. Acting as a disciplined cadre in a physical confrontation gives those involved power beyond their numbers. Like a choral dance, training together builds solidarity and confidence.

There are many anarchists already proficient in martial arts and, in some cities, co-operative, non-hierarchical classes are available, but traditional schools will teach you the skills you need; just don't tell them why you're there!

Training, even without a well-schooled teacher is possible although having a capable instructor is preferable. If there isn't a class available, there are training videos online giving instruction in open hand combat and various weapons.

Long poles, known as *bo* sticks or staffs (think Robin Hood and Little John), might not be the best option for each situation. However, you can easily obtain one at your local lumber yard by getting a 1-1 1/4 inch pine dowel used for a closet rod. You want one as long as you are tall.

Careful. You can do great damage to someone with this weapon, even kill them. Also, having a long shaft without knowledge of how to use it can mean your stick winds up in the hands of your opponent.

Remember, what you can do to someone else, can be done to you. Don't enter the realm of violence without the realization that you could become a casualty.

There are dangers inherent in martial training. Even people who desire non-hierarchical structures can find themselves and their group altered by the process of militarization. The tendency is for those who excel at physical prowess and exhibit the most bravery in combat to rise to leadership on the basis of this. They can become the decision makers since they are seen as the risk takers both by the group and themselves. As anarchists, we realize that armed force is the central definition of the state, and it can play the same pernicious role in our movement, something that must be resisted.

Writing this was disturbing. Most of us are people who don't feel good about hurting others, even those who mean to harm us. There is a long history of revolutionary violence in the struggle to eliminate the institutions of oppression and exploitation, and some of us may become part of it.

Although there can be pride in our victories, it is sad that we may be required to take such actions, no matter how necessary, which have no place in the world we envision.

For training videos including stick fighting, search Jake Mace. For a good laugh and a send-up of martial arts, search "How to Punch a Nazi."

Paul Walker is a long time friend of the *Fifth Estate* in Detroit. He currently practices t'ai-chi ch'üan.



Anti-Racist Action says "No," to the Klan in Skowhegan, Maine in Feb. 2017

It's late February in central Maine. A group of anarchists and other anti-racists have gathered at the Margaret Chase-Smith bridge in Skowhegan to respond to recent Ku Klux Klan activity around the state.

Anti-Racist Action Maine put out the call to condemn these racist terrorists. Mainers are out on the streets to let our neighbors know we will defend each other from KKK terror. This is not a plea for the authorities to protect us. Only we can protect ourselves. >>>>



In November, Klan fliers were found in Appleton. In January, more fliers appeared in Freeport, Augusta and Gardiner. They were emblazoned with a hooded Klansman flanked by burning KKKs and the group's cross logo, and included a contact for a 24-hour Klanline: "You can sleep tonight knowing the Klan is awake."

Calls to the hotline are answered by an automated message inviting callers to dial an extension, or visit the group's website. It thanks the caller, and instructs them to "have a great white day." In April, more Klan fliers appear in Skowhegan, Waterville, and Hallowell. More demos against the Klan occurred in Freeport, Waterville, and Augusta. In each mobilization, people in the local area were the organizers, and were attended by different groups of Mainers.

In the 1920s, KKK membership exploded with an estimated high of eight million members in the U.S. When thinking about Klan activity, one tends to think of the deep South, not the North woods of Maine.

However, outside of the southern states, Maine had the largest Klan chapter in the country in the '20s, peaking at 50,000 members. This was the heyday of the Klan in Maine. The Klan's first daylight march in the U.S. was in Milo, Maine, in 1923. The first Maine state convention of the Klan was held that same year in a forest outside of Waterville and attracted 15,000 people. Burning crosses were in abundance.

The Klan purchased a large estate on Forest Avenue in Portland for its headquarters, and in February 1924, 3,000 Klansmen from around the state gathered for the opening ceremony, initiating 200 new members under a burning cross. Maine KKK had daylight parades in Sanford, Gardiner, Brewer, Milo, Dexter, East Hodgdon, Kittery, and Brownville Junction. Their picnics in Portland attracted over 10,000 people.

**K**lan popularity can be attributed to a Protestant, nativist movement directed against Franco-American, Irish, Italian, Polish, and Lithuanian Catholic immigrants. Immigrants worked in the textile and paper mills, and organized themselves into unions, including the Industrial Workers of the World.

This is where the Klan's anti-labor stance comes from. The Klan in Maine was not only anti-immigrant, but anti-union. Jobs have never been abundant in Maine. Using scapegoats to explain capitalism's ills is a tactic still used today. The Maine KKK of the '20s tapped into a long history of tense relations between Maine's Protestant Yankee populations and Irish Catholic immigrants, who had begun arriving in the 1830s.

The chief recruiter of the Maine's Klan in the 1920s was F. Eugene Farnsworth; who went on statewide speaking tours that drew huge crowds. After the fiery hate speech, locals would be inducted into the Klan for a \$10 membership fee.

Mainers also have a long history of resisting the Klan. In 1924, in Greenville, the Industrial Workers of the World went up against the Klan. The timber companies used the Klan as muscle to drive the IWW out of the area to prevent them from organizing in the lumber camps.

When the Klan told the IWW to get out of town, 175 Wob-

blies showed up to patrol the streets.

The first targets of the Maine Klan were Franco-Americans (immigrants from Quebec), and Irish Catholic immigrants. In Fairfield, in July 1924, Franco-Americans battled the Klan with rocks and clubs, tearing down a fiery cross. That September, they clashed again. This time on two bridges between Saco and Biddeford. The Klan had a parade in Saco, and tried to march to Biddeford.

The Irish blocked the Bradbury bridge, and the French blocked the Main Street bridge. Both groups were heavily armed. Once the Klan saw this, they turned tail back to Saco. This action brought Irish and French immigrants together in common cause, helping them resolve their differences.

**I**n the 1980s, the Maine Klan reared its ugly head again. They burned a cross in Bethel and held a march in South Portland, and a rally and picnic in Rumford. They were trying to capitalize on bitter feelings left by a strike at Rumford's Boise Cascade paper mill. As before, they were met with resistance, organized by local community members, not by any vanguard group.

Over 250 anti-Klan Mainers showed up to confront them in Rumford. Some anti-racists were detained at roadblocks by the police and prevented from getting close to the rally. Blue by day, white by night! After a recruitment drive at the local high school, the Klan (including the Grand Wizard James W. Farlands) headed to a nearby farm for a white supremacist picnic. One hundred and fifty anti-Klan Mainers also showed up. They dumped chicken shit around the picnic arena and chanted "KKK, go home!" Chicken shit for chicken shits!

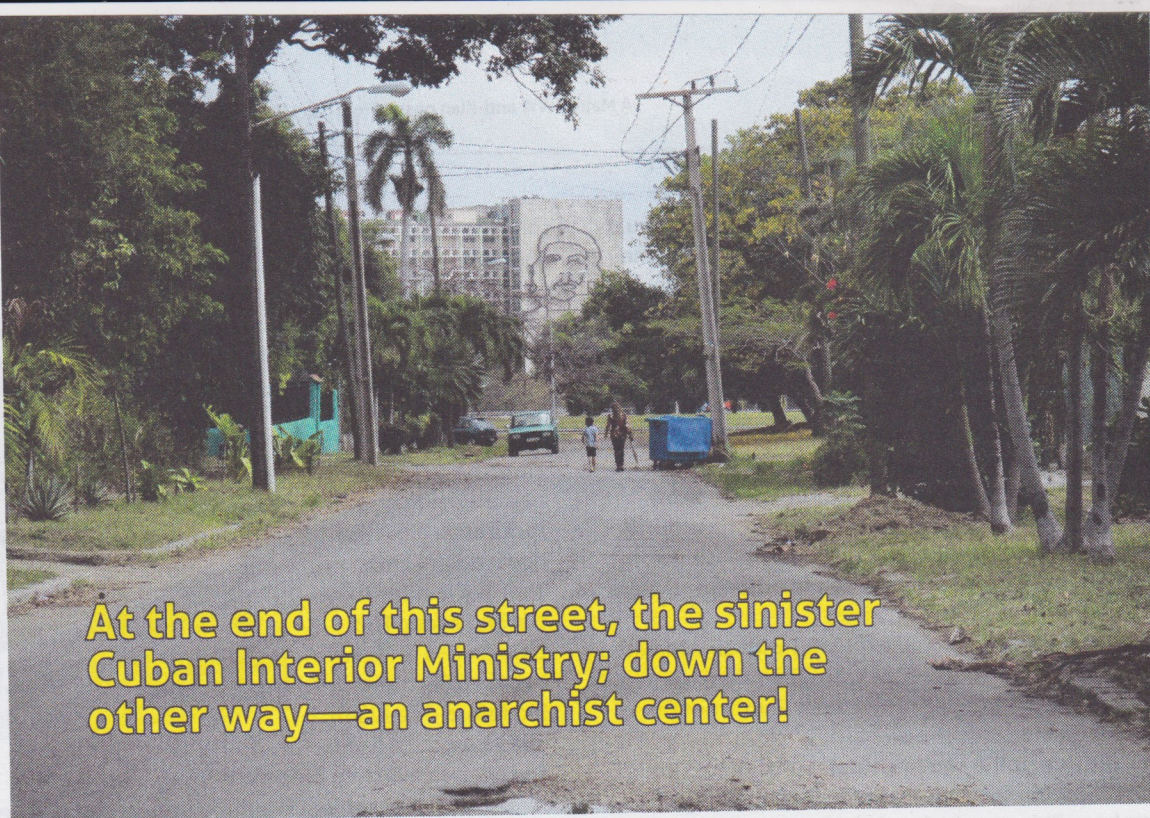
Throughout Maine's history, the KKK has been confronted at every turn, and has become progressively weaker. Now, they are afraid to come out in the open. Anarchists in Maine will continue to combat them. We will continue to live by our anarchist principles of mutual aid, direct action, and voluntary cooperation. We will continue to spread anarchist propaganda in all its forms. We will continue to talk to the potential base of the Klan's recruiting efforts: poor and working class whites who must be educated as to who is the real enemy.

And, if the Klan crawls out of their holes and show themselves, we will do as did the Mainers of the past: attack!

Robcat homesteads and does prisoner support in Maine.







**At the end of this street, the sinister Cuban Interior Ministry; down the other way—an anarchist center!**

# The Anarchist Alternative in Cuba

**BILL WEINBERG**

A former community center that hosted a youth rock scene is now being occupied by activists, seemingly ignored by the authorities. A few blocks away, urban farms are bright patches of green in the landscape, producing vegetables and fruits for the community.

Oakland? Detroit? Manhattan's Lower East Side? Nope. This is Havana.

This April, I returned to Cuba for the first time in 24 years, on assignment to look into the ecological alternative on the island, and how it has fared since the end of what was called in official government parlance the Special Period that began in 1989.

I found an island transformed since those days of crisis, with some elements of the ecological model surviving and others abandoned. But the trip afforded me the opportunity to witness another alternative—an emergent anarchist network, seeking to advance anti-authoritarian ideas as the dictatorship begins to tentatively open up.

Cuba became a living experiment in a post-petrol future for humanity after the collapse of the Soviet Union meant a cut-off of subsidized oil. This crashed the economy, ushered in the Special Period, and prompted a big push for self-sufficient and ecological models—bicycle transportation and urban farms in Havana, organic agriculture in the countryside.

It was in the midst of this crisis, in 1993, that I visited Havana for a conference on urban bicycle transportation, and saw

the beginnings of the community gardens and farms that were taking root in vacant lots around the city.

A generation later, Cuba is getting subsidized oil from Venezuela, opening its economy to private capital, and hoping for an end to the US embargo. Had these ecological alternatives survived?

It was clear from walking around downtown Havana that bicycles have largely been abandoned. They had outnumbered cars on the city streets when I was there in 1993. Now they were almost gone, except the *bici-taxis* that pedaled tourists about amid the incessant car traffic. Official urban planners I spoke to admitted that the bicycle lanes had been forgotten when the oil started to flow again.

It was also clear that something akin to gentrification is taking hold in Old Havana—lots of foreign capital is flowing into the tourism sector, with upscale bars, galleries and restaurants proliferating.

However, I was told that the urban agriculture that started to emerge spontaneously as a self-help measure during the Special Period had been adopted by the bureaucracy and is still going strong.

To see these urban farms, I took a taxi out to Vedado, the greener, more spread-out and in pre-Revolutionary times upscale district to the west of Central Havana. The center of Vedado is the Plaza of the Revolution, Cuba's heart of administrative power, where Che Guevara's iconic face looks down from the wall of the Interior Ministry building.

Just a couple of blocks off this expansive and sterile square,



## Squats, urban organic farms, rock & roll, bicycles, & anarchism in Cuba today.

housing projects stand alongside faded mansions of the long-departed bourgeoisie, now inhabited by working-class residents. On one of these streets, I visited Isbel Díaz Torres, a sometime literature professor and one of Cuba's handful of dissidents of the left. His network, the Cuban Critical Observatory, was founded after the power transfer from Fidel to Raúl Castro in 2006, to bring an explicitly anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist voice to the agitation for greater freedom.

Díaz considers himself an anarchist, and lives much as you'd expect one to—in a squat, or as near as you get to one in Havana. As we passed through the columned entrance of the old house and crossed an interior courtyard, he told me the history.

"In the '90s, this was the Cathedral of Heavy Metal," he recalled with a smile. During the Special Period, the building served as a *casa de cultura*—a government-sanctioned community center—known as the Patio de Maria. But the youth rock scene there got a little out of control, and in 2003 the government had it closed—possibly due to the embarrassment of a hive of metal-heads just a block off the Plaza of the Revolution.

The building sat vacant for a while, but after the devastating hurricanes of 2008, local folk whose homes had been destroyed or damaged took shelter there—and were allowed to stay, their residency unofficial, but tolerated. Díaz and his boyfriend are among them, sharing a small apartment behind the courtyard.

Díaz sees a process of state appropriation of alternative culture at work. He notes that while the rebellious Patio de Maria was shut, a new, official club drawing metal acts, Maxim Rock, has opened on the other side of the Plaza.

"In the beginning, the metal scene was totally underground," he said. "Then they created an agency for it. They have one for rock, they have one for hip-hop—it is totally controlled."

Community agriculture, that other form of reclaimed urban space from the Special Period, survives—although here too, Díaz is cynical. Contrary to official claims, he said gardens are being abandoned around the city. "The perspective of growing your own food on plots proved temporary, now that we have oil and chemicals again."

He noted that two how-to books on gardening and household self-sufficiency that were immensely popular during the Special Period—*El Libro de La Familia* (The Book of the Family) and *Por Nuestras Propias Esfuerzas* (By Our Own Efforts), both published by the army's Olive Green Editions—are "almost forgotten today."

It may be hard to say if the *huertos familiares*—informal family gardens, not regulated by the bureaucracy—are in decline. The formal urban farms—known as *organopónicos*—are clearly thriving.

Díaz took me for a walk just a few blocks from his squat, and we passed big lots planted with rows of spinach, lettuce, chives, celery, parsley, cauliflower. Workers with hoes tilled the ground behind fences intertwined with fruit-bearing vines and flowers or reinforced with rows of cactus.

One *organopónico* is named Quinto Congreso—for the Fifth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party that took place in 1997, the year the farm started. Another is named Plaza, for the municipality that covers Vedado.

The workers took a little time out to answer my questions. These farms began spontaneously, yet often under the direction of bureaucrats who worked in the nearby government office buildings—to feed their own employees during the Special Period. But soon they were formally recognized and organized as collectives. They are still closely linked to the bureaucracy—for instance, selling produce to the Council of State, the highest body of power in Cuba, with its headquarters nearby.

The same process can be seen here, however: a spontaneous bottom-up initiative that came under state control as the price of survival.

Isbel Díaz and his comrades are now organizing to bring an openly anarchist voice to the gradually widening debate on Cuba's future. Six years ago, they founded the Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop as a current to emerge from the Critical Observatory—named for the anarcho-syndicalist leader assassinated by the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado in 1926.

Through meetings they've been holding in Havana over the past two years, they are advancing a critique of what they call Cuban state capitalism, and looking to the legacy of the island's anarchist tradition.

Cuba had a strong anarchist-oriented labor movement,

especially in the cigar industry, from the turn of the century through the repression of the Machado era in the 1920s and '30s.

The very last remnants of this movement were extinguished in the early years of the Castro regime, when anarchist dissenters were imprisoned for "counter-





revolutionary activities." This presaged the regime's more general crackdown on potentially dissident culture, with Afro-Cuban music discriminated against, the Beatles banned, and—most significantly—gays persecuted and even interned.

The regime has loosened up on all these things considerably (there is even a John Lennon Park in Havana), but it remains to be seen how much space will be tolerated for something as openly oppositional as anarchism.

The Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop is currently raising funds to purchase a building in Havana to serve as a social center and anarchist library—taking advantage of the loosening real-estate market.

They've affiliated with a regional Central American and Caribbean Anarchist Federation, to promote anti-authoritarian ideas and action throughout what the US considers its traditional US backyard.

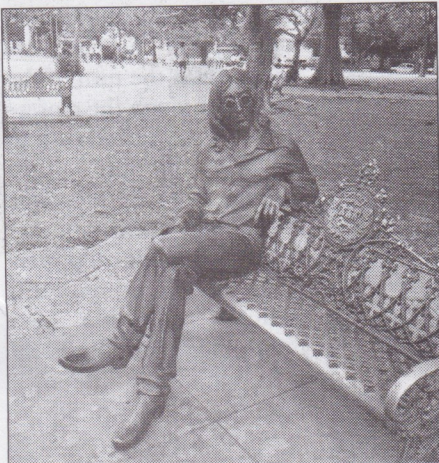
With oil-benefactor Venezuela itself now in deep crisis, and Donald Trump unveiling a hardline Cuba policy that portends a return to Washington's long destabilization campaign, Cuba and the region generally could be looking at grim new challenges in the coming years or even months.

From the seeds I saw in Vedado, it is clear that the anarchist voice, at least, will be there.

*Bill Weinberg blogs at CounterVortex.org.*

*Support the Alfredo López Libertarian Workshop at GoFundMe (Euros only): [go-fundme.com/gg2wrcac](http://go-fundme.com/gg2wrcac).*

Statue of John in John Lennon Park, Havana.  
—photo: Peter Werbe



# The X-Files: Subversive Ideas & Recuperative Media

JASON RODGERS

**T**he X-Files, the science fiction television series that aired from 1993 to 2002, featured fictional FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully concerned with unsolved cases involving paranormal phenomena and aliens.

Its popularity was such that it made many young people aspire to be FBI agents of the same type. However, I never wanted to be Mulder or Scully. I wanted to be a member of the Lone Gunmen, three geeks on the program who published a conspiracy research zine which was often Mulder's source for information related to his cases.

I wonder how much influence the Gunmen had on my own practice of publishing zines. Probably much more than I realize. I still feel a very strong affinity for them. I can't watch the episode in which they die ("Jump the Shark") without crying at the end.

Still, the question needs to be posed, was The X-Files recuperation or subversion? Did it introduce ideas that undermine the current state of affairs? Or, did hegemony transform dangerous ideas into safe commodities?

Media theorist and early cyberpunk culture writer, Douglas Rushkoff, argues that subversive ideas were being introduced into mainstream media by countercultural hell raisers. He made the case in his 1996 book, *Media Virus!* that "children's television and MTV, in fact, are the easiest places to launch countercultural missiles." He explains how this occurs using the science of memetics, the theory of mental content based on an analogy with Darwinian evolution, which rejects the idea that this was metaphorical, stating that media viruses are "not like viruses. They are viruses."

He explains that "the virus code mixes and competes for control with the cell's own genes, and, if victorious, it permanently alters the way the cell functions and reproduces." With this model the power of hegemony is minimized and the subversive possibility of counterculturalists is maximized.

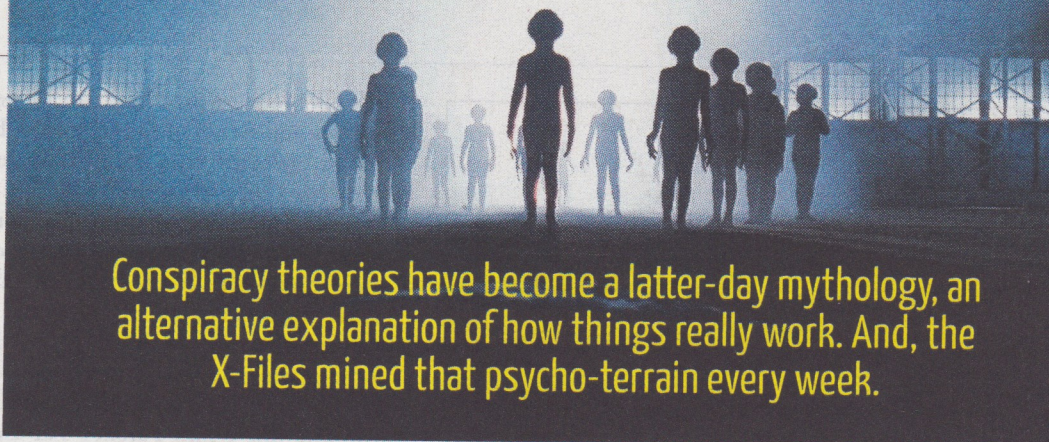
**H**owever, Stephen Duncombe, author of many books on media and cultural studies, argues from the opposite position, that hegemony always attempts to recuperate subversive ideas. He writes that "the effect of watching The X-Files is to reinforce inactivity. Yes, conspiratorial forces do undermine our democracy, but knowing about it is simply 'cool. . .cool like us' as the Fox [network] billboard campaign for the show goes. Because this variety of political culture is something that people just watch, their natural role is that of audience to a spectacle."

Duncombe developed this critique of mainstream media's use of subversive themes from the work of German philosopher and cultural critic, Walter Benjamin, particularly in his 1934 essay, "The Author as Producer," where Benjamin asserts that the means of production are critical to the quality of a text or work of art.

The form of manufacturing used to produce the work, the nature of its distribution, the literary forms used, are all crucial to the artwork itself. The meaning is not separate from the medium. The end product is formed through the modes by which the piece is produced. Benjamin writes that "the bourgeois apparatus of production and publication can assimilate astonishing quantities of revolutionary themes, indeed, can propagate them without calling its own existence, and the existence of the class that owns it, seriously into question."

The author produces not only the obvious content, but also maintains and rep-





Conspiracy theories have become a latter-day mythology, an alternative explanation of how things really work. And, the X-Files mined that psycho-terrain every week.

licates the structures which they use to produce a work and distribute it to an audience. This also duplicates the role ascribed to the audience, whether they are complacent receivers or participants in the social process.

Take, for instance, one of the major influences on *The X-Files*, the work of conspiracy theorist Jim Keith. Chris Carter, the TV show's creator, acknowledges that Keith's book, *Secret and Suppressed*, was a major inspiration for the television program. Keith came out of the counterculture zine scene of the 1980s and '90s. He published "Dharma Combat," one of the best conspiracy zines, which included strong historical conspiracy research, lunatic fringe paranoid rants, occult exercises, and anarchist critical theory.

It featured a veritable who's who of the late '80s/early '90s counterculture. An issue could feature the conspiracy research of John Judge alongside polemics of Hakim Bey and Feral Faun; mind control articles next to flyers by Anti-Authoritarians Anonymous created by John Zerzan and Dan Todd. But the zine was participatory, as any reader could easily contribute, and often did. This was, obviously, not the case with a television program.

There are always unanticipated consequences. Look at the influence of early 20<sup>th</sup> century science fiction pulps on later zines and underground publishing. Pulp fiction maga-

zines were capitalist products publishing to create a profit. Yet, from the letters section arose the contemporary fanzine, an anti-capitalist compositional form. Science fiction readers first connected to each other through letters columns.

Soon, they began publishing their own fanzines and editors quickly made the transition to the burgeoning alternative tabloids of the mid-1960s, as was the case with this publication 52 years ago. They transformed from passive consumers to active producers.

The X-Files may not be as subversive as some of its theme might suggest, but it contains something of a contemporary mythology. After one of the episodes featured an earlier edition of their book, authors Jonathan Vankin and John Whalen devoted a chapter to *The X-Files* in *The 70 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time*.

They point out "its canny ability to tap into the paranoid zeitgeist. Conspiracy theories have become a latter-day mythology, an alternative explanation of how things really work. And the X-Files mined that psycho-terrain every week. The program dealt with issues that provided a set of mythological themes and useful concepts that were not subversive to hegemony, but might now be used subversively.

Jason Rodgers publishes alternative media from PO Box 10894, Albany, NY 12201.

## Armed Against Fascism

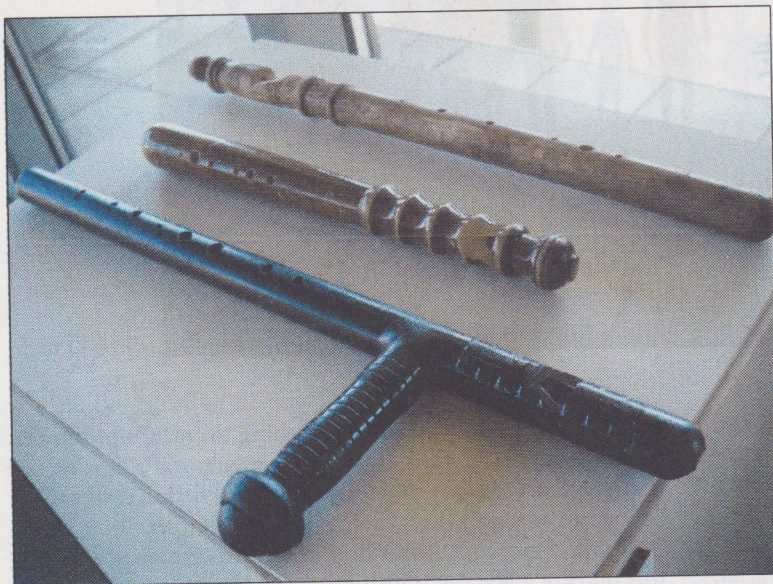
With "These faggots kill fascists" emblazoned on their banner, an army of international volunteers formed the first LGBT fighting unit to "smash the ISIS caliphate." This July photo shows them raising the rainbow flag in Raqqa, Syria. According to an online statement, The Queer Insurrection and Liberation Army, or

TQILA, exists to "smash the gender binary. . . and advance the sexual revolution."

The John Brown Gun Clubs, named after the famous armed abolitionist, consisting of anarchists and antifa, are being organized across the country to the consternation of righties, who thought they had a lock on armaments and authorities who fear a shoot-out among contesting groups could occur. The Phoenix Brown unit first came to public attention in March, pictured here, when they counter-protested a pro-Trump event. The clubs can be reached through [redneckrevolt.org](http://redneckrevolt.org).







Police nightsticks refashioned into flutes at Oakland's Museum of Capitalism

An Oakland pop-up project exhibits the economy

## The Museum of Capitalism

BERNARD MARSZALEK

**T**he Museum of Capitalism (MOC), in Oakland, California, was a provocation not solely for being situated in the Jack London waterfront district, a gentrified marina area, but also for occupying a white elephant of a building erected just as the entire US economy collapsed.

The so-called Great Recession of 2007 could just as appropriately be called the Great Economic Coma, and the capacious future food market that the Museum reclaimed for its quarters, stands as the unintended main exhibit—a cadaver of capitalism.

As a pop-up venture, the Museum had a short life, certainly shorter than capitalism. It closed in mid-August, however its ephemeral status belies its conceptual scope and physical expanse. The Museum's 13,000 sq ft facilitated an extensive and varied exhibition, from a dozen tablecloth size banners depicting the logos of defunct banks suspended over the atrium, to minute dioramas that referred to the slave trade in Philadelphia.

And, from systems of surveillance, both private and public (police) to a long wall of poster-size photos of the commodification of Northern California water diverted to the Central Valley. There, agricultural corporations own enormous water-starved tracts that should never have been planted in the first place. Cheap land, cheap water, and cheap labor combine to feed America profitably.

Besides the material from the Museum's collection of capitalist detritus, there were several noteworthy collaborations with like-minded groups. Probably the most hilarious contribution in this manner was the Art for a Democratic Society's brochure (near the entrance to the restrooms) *The Capitalist Bathroom Experience*.

This brochure was subtitled: "The Struggle for Dignity and Relief in the Capitalist Era," and provided a historic overview of the subject of comfort rewarded after production.

On a more serious note, a section of the Museum delved into a representation of land issues under capitalism. Another collaboration of artists called American Domain, explored the enclosure of space that always defines capitalism's quest to homogenize land for control and profit.

The most charming items, recalling surrealist sculpture like Mimi Parent's Fur Lined Cup and Saucer, were a trio of Police batons carved into flutes.

Besides the various gross representations of economic exploitation in one form or another, the curators of the MOC broadened the conception of this project, beyond simply an archive, to incorporate moments of opposition to capitalism and necessarily to the State that exists to defend the privileges of the one-percent.

The Museum highlighted a most noteworthy opposition—the 1968 encampment on the Mall in Washington, D.C. called Resurrection City. Martin Luther King initiated this remarkable demonstration—the creation of a small city on the Mall—that marked his transition from a civil rights leader to a labor leader, which most likely led to his assassination just months before it took shape.

Carrying the oppositional theme forward in time, a large section of the exhibit was devoted to alternatives to capitalism in the form of Oliver Ressler's *Alternative Economics*, *Alternative Societies* exhibit which widely toured in Europe and had its US premier at the Museum.

**T**he Museum of Capitalism, it should be obvious from this very brief excursion, also stood as an intellectual provocation. Museums are assumed to be musty affairs where time is sequestered to better study a topic, but today, for example, the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, California, a kind of Museum of Utopian Capitalism, attempt to be more interactive and popular family fun venues where it seems that the visit is simply prelude to shopping in the gift shop.

While the MOC had a store, though hidden behind the library in a corner of the vast space, all resemblance to a typical museum ended there. The Museum of Capitalism approximated a reverse recuperation: the dominant paradigm turned against itself. Or, what in a previous era would be termed a Situationist *détournement*.

The MOC, however, steered clear of ideology to state a more concrete, if nonetheless, utopian project. As they write in their Mission Statement:



"Our educational work is crucial for establishing justice for the victims of capitalism and preventing its resurgence. Notably, the museum will also bring to light the vast number of individuals and communities around the globe who resisted capitalism and helped to develop alternatives to it, serving as an inspiration to future generations."

This role as an antibody was facilitated by "a variety of public programming designed to enhance understanding of capitalism and related issues, including those of contemporary significance."

With the Museum's ongoing surveys, its collaborations, its lecture series, its periodic exhibits of acquisitions, and its re-

cently published book, it defines a project that will continue into the future as a multifaceted disruption of the hegemonic culture of capitalism. What is especially important is that collaborationism may indicate an advance on the individualist/artist role and a repudiation of not only the marketplace but also possessive individualism--the core capitalist "project."

Don't be surprised if a Museum of Capitalism, in one form or another, pops-up in your neighborhood.

Bernard Marszalek edited a collection of Paul Lafargue's essays *The Right to be Lazy* available from AK Press [akpress.org](http://akpress.org). He archives his writing at [ztangi.org](http://ztangi.org).

The Museum of Capitalism: [MuseumofCapitalism.org/](http://MuseumofCapitalism.org/)

## Dancing on Capitalism's Grave



Funeral for Capitalism Occupy Oakland procession February 2012.

PAUL DALTON

**W**e gather today not to praise capitalism, but to bury it. Rejoice, the great god greed is dead! It lived far too long, laying waste to all it touched. Its chains have been broken, its tentacles severed. The world is free to breathe again; to grow, to flourish, no longer weighed down by this voracious monster.

Nobody knows its exact birthday. We know it was sired by mercantilism, mid-wived by banking, and nurtured by imperialism. From its earliest days, it showed a mighty appetite—gorging itself on the fruits of the labor of others.

Quickly, it grew fat and strong. It surrounded itself with sycophants, side-kicks, bodyguards, and nannies. Like the royalty it emulated, bards were hired to sing its praises, and

historians commissioned to chronicle the glory it saw in itself.

Capitalism's life was built upon a simple, but powerful, lie. An early acolyte, one Adam Smith, proclaimed that material wealth could be concocted by super-natural forces. Science and history be damned! The economy was not a closed system. Something could, indeed, be made from nothing. No longer did riches need to be stolen, pillaged, spirited away in the night. Now, through an alchemy of hoarding and investing, material wealth could indeed materialize.

Not everyone was thrilled by emergence of this hungry beast. Many saw Mr. Smith's lie for what it was. Even as the monster gestated, signs of discontent emerged. Textile workers went on strike, farmers claimed the land they worked from its lords; even some men of the church inveighed against its excesses.

Although it grew large, it was never very healthy. Insatiable, it required ever more and more just to stay alive. Signs of its fragility came early as well such as the Tulip Mania which collapsed the Dutch economy in 1638.

Responding to each bout of illness with a greater resolve, not to mention increasing appetites, it sent its minions out to find new fields to pluck, new forests to level, new fodder for its machines. It found great success when conquering new lands, subduing or dispatching its inhabitants, taking all it had to give.

**O**f all of Capitalism's children, Industrialism deserves special note. With its machines and interchangeable labor, it took what was old and made it seem new. Although it filled the air with acrid smoke and soot, poisoned the water and ravaged the soil, it remained unperturbed, caring only for its meals, not for the ingredients which made it, or the cooks who prepared it.

As it grew larger, always acutely aware of the unsteady base it rested on, it developed great skill in the art of distraction. When it faltered in one place, it shifted to another. It was as creative as it was destructive. It gave us our bread and our cir-



## We slew the beast and now we come to dance on its grave.

cuses. It let us eat our cake. It assigned value to things where none existed, made virtue from vice, sacrament from sin.

For a brief moment it faced off against some formidable foes. With names like Marx and Bakunin, Goldman and Luxemburg, groups of fighters emerged, shouted the truth, laid bare the lie, and said we'd all be better off once we put this behemoth down. Too quickly, capitalism used brute force and ingenuity to turn the first of those visions of liberation into a sad, frightening, and sickly junior partner, a side-kick.

But today we can rejoice in Capitalism's demise as it finally succumbed to its own weakness and the strength of its enemies, who are legion. The lie rejected, the workers threw monkey wrenches into the gears. The farmers tended to the fields, nurturing rather than ravaging them.

We all agreed to plunder Capitalism's ill gotten gains, and to share them fairly. We used its machines for our benefit, and dismantled those that couldn't serve us. We knew our health came not from the endless gorging by the few, but by the nurturing sustenance of the whole.

We slew the beast and now we come to dance on its grave.

And, dance we will. We have no reason to mourn, only to celebrate and revel in the joy of possibilities of a world where monsters don't enslave us, don't steal our food, don't kill us when we object too loudly or get in its way.

We have suffered enough, but we know Capitalism's legacy will haunt us. But, ghosts only have the power we give them, and they can be exorcized. Each following generation

will benefit more than the last. Our triumph is that we have overcome it; our legacy is a world free of this scourge.

So, let's dance, be merry, celebrate, rejoice! Soon we must get to work to begin rebuilding our new world in the shell of the old. Let us remain ever mindful that the pathogens of capitalism, greed, avarice, and violence, reside within us, and must be kept at bay by the medicine of solidarity, mutual aid, and love of each other and the world from which we came has sustained us, even under Capitalism's relentless attack.

Let our last words to Capitalism be, you won't be missed, nor forgotten. Killing you has made us strong and remembering your avarice will help us avoid our own downfall.

May you rest forever, in *our* peace, the peace we have made by ensuring your demise. We have felled the beast; let it never rise again!

Rejoice, the great god greed and its monstrous child, capitalism are dead. Let the celebration begin!

Paul Dalton is a writer, activist, one time anarchist publisher who lives in Oakland and dreams of the demise of domination.

**FE note:** This article was originally written for the Funeral for Capitalism on Leap Day 2012 Occupy Oakland procession. It was scheduled to run in our Summer 2012 edition, but must have slipped off the table. We're pleased to print it even if a little late.

## Right Wingers Charged in Seattle Shooting

After a three month investigation, a right wing couple was charged in the January 20 shooting and wounding of an anarchist member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The assault took place during a protest against the appearance of alt-right provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos. (See "An Anarchist is Shot in Seattle," FE #398, Summer 2017.)

Several hours after the shooting on the University of Washington (UW) campus, Elizabeth and Marc Hokoana, Seattle right wing activists, went to the police and confessed to involvement in the incident. Both were questioned and released without charges pending further investigation.

It took three months of examining

the evidence before the UW police referred the case to the King County prosecutor who charged Elizabeth Hokoana with first-degree assault for the shooting, and Marc with third degree assault for pepper spraying protesters during the protest melee.

Bail was first set at \$50,000 each, however, at their arraignment it was reduced to \$10,000. Both were allowed to remain free for 48 hours to make bail arrangements. They were each able to get the necessary funds, and remain out of jail.

Both Hokoanas have gun permits, but are prohibited by the court from possessing firearms as well as barred

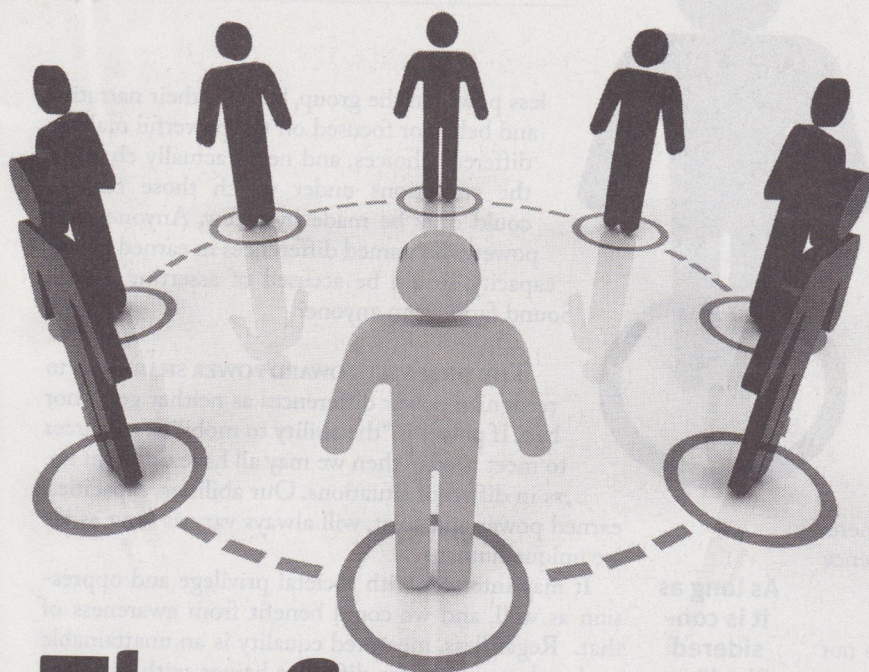


Jan. 20 demo in Seattle where IWW member was shot by a right winger.

from the University of Washington campus while the case is pending.

The couple declined plea deals because they want to go to trial. Their lawyers said the Hokoanas intend to claim self-defense, asserting that their actions were justified, and gambling that a jury will agree and find them innocent.





# The Game of Not Seeing The Game

How do we deal with power relationships within anarchist communities?

MARS ZAINEB GOETIA

"They are playing a game. They are playing at not playing a game. If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game."

—R.D. Laing, *Knots*

I remember sitting in a circle, making tough decisions about how to respond to a community conflict that had escalated to the point of physical violence. It was a heated discussion.

None of us knew what the fuck we were doing. We were angry. We were scared. No one wanted to be wrong.

Why would anyone be upset about violence? We weren't pacifists. The conversation was often steered away from the truth of people's experiences by others who exercised influence over the group.

But we had no leaders, right? Despite lacking official leadership, the unnamed power differences made it near impossible for everyone to share how they were impacted and what they knew. It was clear that some people had the power to shape the perspectives that were allowed, and it was clear that not everyone's experience or opinion would carry the same weight. While some of this may have had to do with systemic privilege, most of it had to do with other kinds of power. But we never talked about it.

Equality is an unattainable goal as long as we are different beings with different gifts & challenges.

Leadership and power differences are heavily stigmatized in anarchist communities and organizations. This makes sense. Time and time again, movements are co-opted by so-called leadership. Also, many of us have been a part of organizations and groups where concentrated power made us less effective, and easier to disrupt.

Probably the most pressing reason is that we live in a society based on power-over and power-under, and this is at odds with anarchist values and visions. In the dominant culture, power is primarily achieved by being above someone else, rather than coming from our own agency.

This means that people can either be in a position of supremacy, where our own empowerment requires the oppression of others, or we can be in a position of powerlessness, constantly blaming those with more power for our conditions and placing our fate in their hands. The two dynamics feed one another and therefore maintain the status quo.

Of course, we can occupy multiple positions, and different situations may grant us more or less access to privilege. No matter where you are positioned in society, this dynamic is at odds with our human need for autonomy.

If I am in a power-over position, I will constantly feel precarious, because rather than having true autonomy I am relying on an oppressive apparatus to give me power. If I am in a power-under position, my need for autonomy will never be met as I constantly look to the powerful to change their behavior and choices in order to make my conditions better.

Even though we envision and long for a different relationship to autonomy and each other, these two positions make sense as long as we live in industrial capitalism. I was in a workshop last year led by radical facilitator and author Miki Kashtan where she defined power as "the ability to mobilize resources to



meet needs.”

We do not all have the same power in an oppression-based system. It is hard to locate our agency when the apparatus we are dealing with is massive and harmful. I am not suggesting that we simply need to make different personal choices. I am suggesting that we recognize ways in which we recreate power-over and power-under narratives and infrastructures, even informally, so that we can disrupt that pattern and stop it from feeding itself.

This is where the stigmatization of power differences comes in. As long as it is considered “bad” to have more power than someone else, we will not be able to openly address and make choices about power dynamics. With a stigma, there will always be incentive to deny that power difference exists.

**EGALITARIAN SPACES, AND POWER SHARING,** do not come from removing power differences. They come from adequately naming and facing the truth about our varying power so we can openly dissent, consent, or both. If someone is punished for naming it, or for acknowledging that she has more power, even if that punishment is as simple as being labeled “bad”, we run the risk of being governed by power differences without our consent. This starts to look a lot like power-over and power-under.

I have had many experiences with anarchist groups that struggled with stigmatization of power difference. I was in one group where those with less power consistently became frustrated with lack of influence and access to resources, and looked to people with more power to grant them access or do things their way.

Meanwhile, people with more power, actually held more responsibilities and maintained more relationships. This meant that changing their behavior had high stakes for what they were working on. Rather than talking openly about this, people with power often made decisions behind closed doors to avoid being chastised, which further fueled the complaints about lack of influence.

Since anarchists tend to be much more comfortable talking about power as it relates to privilege and oppression, but not earned power or power based on capacity and ability, any discussion of power would center on societally-sanctioned privilege rather than other prominent types of power difference. This meant that people without access to certain privileges didn't have their power positions discussed despite the influence on the dynamics of the group.

It meant that many issues that affected power dynamics for people with access to privilege never came to light. It perpetuated powerlessness for those with



**As long as it is considered “bad” to have more power than someone else, we will not be able to openly address and make choices about power dynamics.**

less power in the group, because their narrative and behavior focused on the powerful making different choices, and never actually changed the conditions under which those choices could only be made by a few. Anyone with power who named differences in earned power capacity, would be accused of asserting power. Sound familiar to anyone?

**THE FIRST STEP TOWARD POWER SHARING** is to recognize power differences as neither good nor bad. If power is “the ability to mobilize resources to meet needs,” then we may all have different access in different situations. Our abilities, capacities, earned power and trust, will always vary as long as we are unique humans.

It may intersect with societal privilege and oppression as well, and we could benefit from awareness of that. Regardless, measured equality is an unattainable goal as long as we are different beings with different gifts and challenges.

We cannot consent to, or change dynamics that we cannot discuss. We cannot discuss anything openly as long as it is in anyone's best interest to pretend it's not there.

I encourage anarchists to destigmatize the conversation. Shared power comes from consent and mutual responsibility, not equality.

Naming and facing power difference will allow groups to harvest the wisdom that comes from dissent, acknowledge unique contributions, and welcome each of us into responsibility and choice about dynamics that affect us all.

Mars Zaine Goetia is a working-class mother, anarchist, musician, and prison abolitionist. She studies and practices group facilitation and radical approaches to conflict and harm. A high school drop-out who makes money as a bike messenger, since 2003, Mars has lived in a close-knit anarchist community in Santa Cruz, Calif.

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR ISSUE #400

Next issue will be our 400th since we began publishing 52 years ago. If you'd like to be part of this historic edition, please send proposals for essays, articles, and fiction to our email address or post office box.

Photographs, art, and poetry are also welcome. Please view our submission and manuscript guidelines on our web site. All submissions should be consistent with our political views.

Send proposals to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org)  
Submission deadline: December 15



# Defense of home in northern Spain

## Basque Country Squat

### ERREKALEOR BIZIRIK COLLECTIVE

**E**rrekaleor Bizirik is a large squat occupied by over 150 adults and children in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the capital city of the Basque Autonomous Community in northern Spain.

The name, Errekaleor, a contraction of a Basque word that means dry river, refers to the plateau on which the neighborhood is situated. Like other large squats in Spain, such as Can Vies (see *Fifth Estate*, Summer 2017), Errekaleor is resisting police and government efforts to evict the residents.

The Errekaleor squat is located on 25 acres of land. There are 32 residential buildings with six apartments each, which were previously inhabited by poor workers who were forced to relocate during the dictator Franco's industrialization program.

There are also a number of non-residential buildings that were part of the original development, including a school, stores, and two church buildings. Over the decades, the neighborhood caught the eye of local developers and city officials. After kicking out almost all of the residents in the early 2000s in order to build yet another disgusting, isolating, and corporate housing development, the 2009 economic crisis hit the city and put all their plans on hold.

Responding to the obvious attempt to boost real estate speculation in a city with 15,000 empty homes, and the impossibility of paying rent in an increasingly expensive market, in 2013 a dozen students occupied one of the buildings in Errekaleor.

**O**nce the neighborhood was stripped of inhabitants by the city, the students turned mountains of rubble into an organic farm, a bakery, a bar, a library, a theater, a free store, a recording studio, a print shop, and livable housing for over 150 students, workers, and families.

In May, power company workers and vans of riot police entered the neighborhood to cut the main electrical line to the project. Residents resisted as best they could. The city council



Defenders of the Basque Squat are prepared for police assault

**When your very home, life & community are under attack, all these moments are like high-voltage electricity running through your body.**

later confirmed that the action was illegal, but the next day the mayor publicly stated his intention to evict the neighborhood during summer.

In response, squat participants built barricades and held parties, printed insulting pamphlets about our enemies and reasoned explanations of our position, and planted seeds in the Errekaleor farm and the media alike. We spent nights guarding the entrance to the neighborhood and days building a network of resistance and support.

Cultural memory of eviction resistance seems nothing like the daily experience of living in the middle of it. Stories and myths of resistance almost always focus on marches and riots, the wittiest signs and best-aimed rocks.

**F**rom an outside perspective, these moments of rebellion are the most visible and exciting, and can almost be taken as a force of nature that was simply waiting to explode. Looking at articles and media about the 1999 Battle for Seattle, the Trump inauguration protests, and the G20 rebellion in Hamburg this July, the narrative is almost entirely informed by the most exciting moments.

Photos of Hamburg show spirited resistance, but do not show the many local squats that acted as the organizational

*Continued on Page 41*





Excerpt from *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* by James C. Scott

## *The Golden Age of the Barbarians*

James C. Scott has written extensively on how people have transitioned from tribal societies to civilization as part of the process of state formation, and how resistance to state domination has occurred in this context.

In *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* and *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, he explores tools for state control of subjects, such as permanent last names, standardization of language and

legal discourse, regularized weights and measures, records of numbers of people and wealth in land and other property, as well as the design of cities and transportation.

In his latest book, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (Yale, 2017), Scott focuses on the integral relationships between the waging of war, slavery, and state formation, as well as the multifaceted relationships between agriculture and civilization.

He also discusses the many ways that non-state people developed to resist being drawn into states or to escape them.

Scott challenges the dominant idea that people have necessarily been happier, healthier, and safer living in densely

populated state dominated urban centers than in small decentralized social groupings.

He describes how centralization of control leads to increases in inequalities and hierarchies within societies (including between rich and poor and between men and women), intensified forced labor, increases in infectious diseases, narrowing of diets, and impoverishing of the eco-system. All of these provide good reasons why people have often wanted to escape from states.

In this context, Scott suggests the breakdown of civilizations can be viewed as a possibly positive event, often inaugurating salutary reformulation of social relations.

In the book and in the excerpts below, Scott uses the term barbarian ironically and positively to designate non-state people, those who resist state rule. However, He refuses to oversimplify or schematize the history of barbarian resistance to states, and acknowledges that barbarians have frequently collaborated with and even ended by strengthening them.

The history of the peasants is written by the townsmen

The history of the nomads is written by the settled

The history of the hunter-gatherers is written by the farmers

The history of the non-state peoples is written by the court scribes

All may be found in the archives catalogued under "Barbarian Histories"

**L**ooked at from outer space in 2,500 BCE, the very earliest states in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley (for example, Harappan) would have been scarcely

ly visible. In, say, 1,500 BCE there would have been a few more centers (Maya and the Yellow River), but their overall geographical presence may actually have shrunk. Even at the height of the Roman and early Han "super-states," the area of their effective control would have been stunningly modest. With respect to population, the vast majority throughout this period (and arguably up until at least 1600 CE) were still non-state peoples: hunters and gatherers, marine collectors, horticulturalists, swiddeners, pastoralists, and a good many farmers who were not effectively governed or taxed by any state. The frontier, even in the Old World, was still sufficiently capacious to beckon those who wished to keep the state at arm's length.

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Barbarian geography corresponded with what is distinctive about barbarian ecology and demography. As a residual category it describes modes of subsistence and settlement that



**Barbarians were, by virtue of their mobility, their diverse livelihoods, and their dispersal, unsuitable raw material for appropriation and state building, and it was for precisely these reasons that they were called barbarians.**

are not those of the state grain core. In a Sumerian myth, the goddess Adnigkidu is admonished not to wed a nomad god, Martu, as follows: "He who dwells in the mountains... having carried on much strife... he knows not submission, he eats uncooked food, he has no house where he lives, he is not interred when he dies..." One can scarcely imagine a more telling mirror image of life as a grain-producing, domus-based state subject.

The Record of Rites (Liji) of the Zhou Dynasty contrasts the barbarian tribes who ate meat (raw or cooked) instead of the "grain food" of the civilized. Among the Romans, the contrast between their diet of grain and the Gallic diet of meat and dairy products was a key marker of their claim to civilized status.

Barbarians were dispersed and highly mobile, and lived in small settlements. They might be shifting cultivators, pastoralists, fisher folk, hunter-gatherers, foragers, or small-scale collector-traders. They might even plant some grain and eat it, but grain was unlikely to be their dominant staple as it was for state subjects. They were, by virtue of their mobility, their diverse livelihoods, and their dispersal, unsuitable raw material for appropriation and state building, and it was for precisely these reasons that they were called barbarians.

Such distinctions admitted of differences in degree, and this, in turn, served to demarcate, for the state, those barbarians who were plausible candidates for civilization from those who were beyond the pale.

To Roman eyes, the Celts, who cleared land, raised some grain, and built trading towns (oppida), were "high-end" barbarians, while acephalous, mobile hunting bands were irredeemable. Barbarian societies can, like the oppida Celts, be quite hierarchical, but their hierarchy is generally not based on inherited property and is typically flatter than the hierarchy found in agrarian kingdoms.

The vagaries of geography often meant that the central grain-core territory was fragmented by, say, hills and swamps, in which case the state's core might include several "unincorporated" barbarian areas. A state often bypassed or hopped over recalcitrant zones in the process of knitting together nearby arable areas.

The Chinese, for example, distinguished between "inner barbarians," who were in such quarantined areas, and "outer barbarians," at the frontiers of the state. The civilizational narratives of the early states imply, if they don't state directly, that some primitives, through luck or cleverness, domesticated crops and animals, founded sedentary communities, and went on to found towns and states. They left primitivism behind for state and civilization.

The barbarians, according to this account, are the ones who

did not make the transition, those who remained outside. After this great divergence there were two spheres: the civilized sphere of settlement, towns, and states on the one hand and the primitive sphere of mobile, dispersed hunters, foragers, and pastoralists on the other. The membrane between the two spheres was permeable, but only in one direction. Primitives could enter the sphere of civilization—this was, after all, the grand narrative—but it was inconceivable that the "civilized" could ever revert to primitivism.

We now know this view to be, on the historical evidence, fundamentally wrong. It is mistaken for at least three reasons.

First, it ignores the millennia of flux and movement back and forth between sedentary and non-sedentary modes of subsistence and the many mixed options in between. Fixed settlement and plough agriculture were necessary to state making, but they were just part of a large array of livelihood options to be taken up or abandoned as conditions changed.

Second, the very act of establishing a state and its subsequent enlargement was itself typically an act of displacement. Some of the pre-existing population may have been absorbed, but others, perhaps a majority, may have moved out of range. Many of a state's adjacent barbarian populations may well have been, in effect, refugees from the state-making process itself.

Third, once states were created, as we have seen, there were frequently as many reasons for fleeing them as for entering them. If, as the standard narrative suggests, people are attracted to the state for the opportunities and security that it offers, it is also true that high rates of mortality coupled with flight from the state sphere were sufficiently offsetting that slaving, wars for capture, and forced resettlement seemed integral to the manpower needs of the early state.

The key point for our purposes is that, once established, the state was disgorging subjects as well as incorporating them. Causes for flight varied enormously—epidemics, crop failures, floods, salinization, taxes, war, and conscription—provoking both a steady leakage and occasionally a mass exodus.

Some of the runaways went to neighboring states, but a good many of them—perhaps especially captives and slaves—left for the periphery and other modes of subsistence. They became, in effect, barbarians by design. Over time an increasingly large proportion of non-state peoples were not "pristine primitives" who stubbornly refused the domus, but ex-state subjects who had chosen, albeit often in desperate circumstances, to keep the state at arm's length.

This process, detailed by many anthropologists, among whom [French Anthropologist] Pierre Clastres is perhaps the most famous, has been called "secondary primitivism." The longer states existed, the more refugees they disgorged to the

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Workshop participants in Denton, Tex. conference

—photo: Jordan E. Mazurek  
- Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons

## Noise Demonstration at Prison Gate

# Anti-Toxic Prison Conference Plans Abolition Strategies & Rocks Carswell

### CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT TOXIC PRISONS

**F**rom June 2 to 5, the second annual Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons (FTP) hosted its 2017 National Convergence in Denton, Texas, gathering over 200 activists and revolutionaries from across the country to explore the intersections of the environmental movement and the struggle to end mass incarceration.

The Convergence was held in Denton to be within striking distance of the Federal Medical Center (FMC) Carswell prison located in nearby Forth Worth and demand its closure.

Officially the site is designed to house female prisoners who have special health-related needs. Over 1,500 women and transgender prisoners are currently housed there. The facility is surrounded by toxic military Superfund sites from the base where it is co-located.

The Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons (FTP) is a collaborative project whose purpose is to develop a strategic framework for organizing against prisons that is rooted in environmental justice.

The project is dedicated to grassroots

organizing, advocacy and direct action tactics that target especially toxic prison facilities which are putting prisoners at risk of dangerous environmental conditions, as well as impacting surrounding communities and ecosystems by their construction and operation.

Organizers and advocates from across the continent gathered to participate in workshops, some with as many as 75 attendees, plenary panel discussions and breakout conversations.

Throughout the weekend participants were also able to open lines of communication with prisoners through direct call-ins with them, letters written to be shared, prerecorded messages, and calls from support people who relayed messages on behalf of their friends or family.

**P**anels included sessions such as "Prisons, Health and the Environment: Mapping the Impact of Toxic Prisons and a Strategy to Shut them Down," featuring the voices of Ramona Africa, David Pellow, Cherelle Blazer and Gabriel Piser, followed in the afternoon by "Organizing Behind Bars- Former Prisoners and the Family Members of Current Prisoners Tell Their Stories," with stories from

former George Jackson Brigade member Mark Cook, Leonard Peltier's niece, and defense committee organizer Kari Ann Boushee, among others.

Delicious lunches, dinners, and day long snacks were prepared by the Seeds of Peace kitchen collective.

FTP was excited to help launch an international effort to demand the immediate closure of Carswell's Administrative Unit, a unit similar to draconian Communication Management Units (CMU). The unit is used to isolate female and trans political prisoners as well as ones with serious mental health needs.

Prisoners and their loved ones have been documenting abuses in this prison for years with little to no response from the federal Bureau of Prisons which oversees it.

The Carswell Admin Unit is currently holds prominent voices from the inside such as Ana Belen Montes, convicted as a Cuban spy, Aafia Siddiqui, framed on charges of attempting to murder GIs, and until his recent transfer into the general prison population, Green Scare victim, Marius Mason.

**O**n June 5, convergence participants traveled to the Carswell prison armed with a mobile sound system, bullhorn, and enormous banners. See front page photo.

The demonstration created a loud disruption for guards and establish contact with prisoners across the razor wire fences with amplified chants of, "You are not forgotten, you are not alone, we will fight to bring you home!" Prisoners replied with waves and raised fists.

This is the second national convergence and the interest and enthusiasm shown has encouraged organizers to make the FTP National Convergence an annual event.

Help close Carswell by calling the US Department of Justice and telling them to immediately shut down the Carswell Admin Unit: Department of Justice Comment Line: 202-353-1555. DOJ Main Switchboard: 202-514-2000.

For more information, please check out [FightToxicPrisons.org](http://FightToxicPrisons.org).



Moved from repressive unit; given transgender status

## Victories for Green Scare prisoner Marius Mason

CINDY CRABB

**A**fter seven years in a highly secretive, repressive unit of a Texas federal prison for women, environmental Green Scare political prisoner, Marius Mason, has finally been moved into a less restrictive section.

He is now able to go outside, touch the trees, and see the clouds and stars, something he reports he will never take for granted again.

Marius Mason is an anarchist, environmentalist, and animal rights activist serving nearly 22 years in federal prison for acts of property damage carried out in defense of the planet.

He pleaded guilty in 2009 to arson at a Michigan State University lab researching GMOs for Monsanto and admitted to 12 other acts of environmental sabotage resulting only in property damage.

He was released in May from the Administrative Unit within Carswell Federal Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Marius came out as transgender in 2014. Previously known as "Marie Mason," he changed his name (though not yet legally), uses male pronouns, and in 2016 received a medical diagnosis allowing him to receive hormone therapy.

The Carswell Administrative Unit is similar to Communication Management Units (CMU) that are currently under legal challenge by the Center for Constitutional Rights.

### ON THE INSIDE

Marius is adjusting to life in the new unit, where for the majority of the day he is doing prison labor, involved in mandatory therapy groups and studying for his Ohio University psychology course work. He is busy from 6am to lights out. He is behind on correspondence, but needs letters and cards from

friends and supporters to help him feel connected to the outside world.

Fortunately, Marius' new unit previously housed a transgender man, so policy has already been established and the majority of the guards and inmates use his chosen pronoun. He says the general atmosphere is far less hostile compared to the Administrative Unit, and has been able to speak with two transwomen in Carswell, being inspired and learning a lot from their advocacy work.

### ON THE OUTSIDE

This year's June 11<sup>th</sup> International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason & All Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners events and individual donations raised enough money to cover four and a half months of Marius' commissary needs.

The Fight Toxic Prisons convergence held near the prison, June 2-5, paid for Marius' attorney Moira Meltzer-Cohen to travel to Texas where she established contact with a sympathetic Texas lawyer who will begin working on a legal name change.

The case will be filed in Texas court, but will likely be rejected as most prisoner name changes are denied. If so, the decision will be appealed to the federal court system, helping to set precedent for prisoners across the country who want or need to change their names to comply with gender-affirming care, or because of divorce or religious reasons.

Marius is seeking a passionate vegan group or individual to spearhead a campaign to improve vegan options in federal prisons. Contact the support committee if you can take this on.

### ART

Marius' paintings are going on the road. Exhibitions of his prison paintings have been displayed or are opening in



"Self-portrait"—Marius Mason

Bloomington, Indiana, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. In addition, an exhibition called "The Food Show" at the bG Gallery in Santa Barbara, Calif., featured the work of 50 artists including two from Marius, one which was a portrait of Indian water activist, Vandana Shiva.

Please be in touch at supportmariusmason@riseup.net if you'd like to coordinate an exhibit in your city.

### SUPPORT MARIUS

Send letters, cards, photographs, and printouts of interesting articles (nothing regarding illegal activities) to: Marie (Marius) Mason, #04672-061, FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137, Fort Worth TX 76127

Marius' web site is SupportMariusMason.org to donate, for ongoing developments, sign up for his email list, and order Marius' poetry, t-shirts, CDs, and postcard series.

**Facebook:** facebook.com/supportmariusmason/

**Support Committee:** supportmariusmason@riseup.net

Cindy Crabb is an author, therapist, and prison abolitionist living in Pittsburgh. Her books, *Encyclopedia of Doris* and *Learning Good Consent*, are available from AK Press. She runs a small distro at dorisdoris.com.



"They're in there for us; we're out here for them!" —IWW Slogan

## Project FANG Builds Solidarity Through Prison Visits

PEPPER KINCADE

**T**he fight for our imprisoned comrades can take many forms of solidarity. The protest at Carswell prison in Fort Worth on June 5 was a rowdy and exciting example of what support can look like.

It was loud, it was public, and it was powerful for both the people inside and outside the prison. But sometimes our support necessarily takes a much more personal, but equally powerful form.

Visits from friends, family, and com-

rades. Travel costs might include not only an expensive plane ticket, but also lodging, a rental car, and meals. These quickly add up to hundreds of dollars.

Project FANG was established in 2016 by the NYC Anarchist Black Cross as a much-needed attempt to fill a gap in the ongoing support work for earth and animal liberation prisoners in the United States. By providing visitation funds, FANG maintains the vital and imperative connections between inside and out.

Julie, a friend of Marius Mason serving 22 years for eco-sabotage says, "The U.S. government is holding Marius Mason in a high security prison far away from his closest friends and family, making it very difficult and expensive to visit. This isolation has been painful for him and everyone close to him. The

work FANG is doing to subsidize visits to prisoners is extremely important in

fighting this oppressive and unnecessary system, and there is no end in sight for the incarcerated."

Funds are available through project FANG to prisoners who meet two basic eligibility requirements: 1) that they were arrested for earth/animal liberation activities and 2) that they have adhered to the imperative of non-cooperation with the state. Currently, project FANG provides funds for about a dozen eco/animal liberation prisoners on a quarterly basis including Marius Mason, Rebecca Rubin, Justin Solondz, Tyler Lang, Brian Vaillancourt, Joseph Buddenberg, and Nicole Kissane.

Each eligible prisoner could receive funds for a visit four times a year. However, this depends on the ability to keep replenishing the funds. While FANG currently receives a very generous recurring donation from its primary funder, that money is increasingly being more quickly depleted. This is good! It means that people are using the fund and incarcerated comrades are receiving much needed visits.

But FANG organizers say it also means that they need to expand their fundraising efforts if the project is going to continue providing this support. Also, they want to expand project FANG at some point in the future with the eventual goal of offering funds to anarchist prisoners.

"Right now," says one of the organizers, "our primary funder has requested that the funds focus on eco/animal prisoners. While we are not at the point quite yet, where can expand to supporting a wider range of prisoners, donations we receive in the coming months will move us closer to that goal."

Pepper Kincade is an anarchist from Charleston, South Carolina who is focused on providing support to those imprisoned for the struggles of earth and animal liberation.



Demonstration at Carswell Federal Prison, June 5, part of the Fight Toxic Prisons conference. —photo: Jordan E. Mazurek

rades are repeatedly identified by prisoners as one of the most important life lines that exist for them. Without visits, the crushing isolation of life inside a prison becomes unbearable. Maintaining connections with people on the outside helps people inside fend off the isolation that prison so forcefully engenders. And, it helps us on the outside stay connected to people who remain an integral part of our struggles and our communities. Real human connection is the thing prison tries the hardest to crush.

However, visits can often be prohibitively expensive for people who have imprisoned friends, loved ones, and

### How to Help Project FANG

Make a donation to project FANG to pay for prisoner visits.

Spread the word about project FANG to eligible prisoners.

Inform people who can make this a sustainable solidarity effort.

Information about project FANG is at [nycabc.wordpress.com/fang](http://nycabc.wordpress.com/fang).



## J20 Protesters Answer State Repression with Resistance

ANONYMOUS

**P**eople arrested during the January 20 Inauguration Day demonstrations are facing up to 75 years in prison as the Trump administration is bringing the hammer down on protests.

This is being met by an organized legal pushback on the part of the defendants, and by increased solidarity actions.

On January 20 (J20), thousands of people went to Washington D.C. to oppose the inauguration of President Donald Trump. While the day's events were largely overshadowed in the mainstream media by the Women's March on January 21—which drew hundreds of thousands of people to the capital—January 20 was an inspirational day of resistance.

Amidst the blockades, marches, and other forms of protest that took place, approximately 230 people were arrested for allegedly participating in an anti-capitalist and anti-fascist march.

Within an half an hour, police attacked the march, indiscriminately using pepper spray and other crowd control weapons against the crowd. Eventually and without warning, the police cordoned off an entire city block—and as they have done multiple times before in D.C.—arrested everyone trapped in that space.

Unlike previous mass arrest cases in which charges have typically dropped or substantially reduced, the J20 case is set to continue for the next year and a half with the prosecution escalating the repression rather than backing away from it. Despite a preliminary report from the Office of Police Complaints that questioned the Metropolitan Police



Poster from July solidarity week.

**Inauguration Day defendants facing 75 years in prison need our solidarity.**  
How to help is at  
[defendj20resistance.org/support](http://defendj20resistance.org/support)

Department's conduct on Inauguration Day and a lawsuit from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) that charges serious mistreatment and violations of constitutional rights, the state is using the J20 case to make it clear that disruptive protest will be met with harsh consequences.

The group of 230 was originally charged with one count of felony rioting, an unprecedented charge that was applied across the whole group. Journalists, medics, legal observers, and random people swept up were all charged with the same acts.

Phones were seized and hacked by the government and Facebook accounts were subpoenaed as part of the investigation. While charges against some journalists and legal observers were dropped, the majority of the group was re-indicted on April 28 with eight felony charges: rioting, inciting to riot, conspira-

cy to riot, and 5 counts of property destruction.

However, just as the march the defendants are accused of participating in was animated by a spirit of defiance and solidarity, defendants—most of whom did not know each other beforehand—are working together to respond to these charges in a collective way.

Over half of the defendants have signed a non-cooperation agreement pledging to each other that they will not cooperate with the state against their co-defendants. Defendants are actively coordinating legal strategy and working together to fight the charges. Many have also pledged to reject plea agreements.

Alongside these efforts, supporters have come together to help defendants with everything from fundraising to finding defendants housing when they are in D.C. The outpouring of support shows the anarchist movement at its best and it is that baseline of solidarity that makes it possible for people to undertake courageous actions in the street.

Another way in which this solidarity has manifested itself was a "Week of Solidarity" held from July 20 to July 27. Across the United States, from small cities such as Carbondale, Ill. and Ypsilanti, Mich. to larger ones, supporters held fundraisers and informational events. The week was designed to raise the profile of the case.

In a lot of ways, the prosecution has been able to continue because it has received so little attention. Against this silence, during the week supporters focused on new outreach efforts including call-in campaigns demanding that the charges be dropped, postering and leafleting, and more. It was a chance for people to come together and refocus their efforts and start considering what it means to build support and resistance over what is going to be a long-term fight.

The stakes in this case are high, both for the defendants, but for anyone who choose to resist in a way that attempts to



move beyond symbolic acts.

It is part of the ongoing escalation of repression that has been directed at social movements since 9/11, with the Green Scare, the NATO 3, the Cleveland 4, and many other cases that have sought harsh penalties against participants in a range of different movements.

The J20 case—along with newer efforts such as state-level legislation designed to further criminalize protest and enhance penalties for disruptive

protests—are part of these ongoing attacks on social movements.

The first trial dates have been set for November of this year, with a few more happening in December. However, the bulk of the defendants will not be tried until well into 2018. Defendants continue to need a lot of support, with everything from donations for ongoing travel and legal fees to general outreach and awareness raising. In many ways, this case is an important test of both the

government's ability to stifle resistance and our ability as movements to respond in a way that keeps our comrades out of prison and builds solidarity.

Anonymous remains so due to the nature of the current political repression. They are a defendant in the cases stemming from J20.

For ongoing updates on the J20 case, visit [defendj20resistance.org](http://defendj20resistance.org)



## Of Sports & Women's Bodies

**The Little Communist Who Never Smiled,**  
Lola Lafon  
Seven Stories Press, 2016,  
320pp.  
English translation from French  
by Nick Caistor

Today, it is an older, wearier Nadia who raises her arms. She leans into a back walk-over, but she falters and falls. "I am not a perfect 10 anymore," Nadia says. "I can only try my best." *People Magazine*, 1990 (she was 28)

### MARIEKE BIVAR-WIKHAMMER

*The Little Communist Who Never Smiled* is an impossibly insightful imagining of the events and the political and emotional aftermath of Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci's incredible performance at the 1976 Olympics.

From the first chapter, which plunges us into the emotional suspense felt by a 14-year-old Comaneci waiting to receive her score from Olympic judges, this fictionalized account of Comaneci's life between 1976 and 1990 is an overwhelming, beautiful nightmare.

The unease that begins to mount as Lafon throws post-Olympic gold headlines at us describing Comaneci as "adorable," "petite," and a "fairy," is at first lessened as we swing back into more stories of the young gymnast's successes and ambitions. Yet as the narrative unfolds into a tangle of politics, media, objectification and violence, the dread begins to mount again as familiar themes emerge.

*The Little Communist* is a fictional biography with a fiercely critical gaze. Various

aspects of feminine youth worship and its flipside, the denigration and outright disgust with which the aging female body is viewed are exposed ruthlessly, using the elite gymnastics world of the 1970s, '80s and '90s as a backdrop.

The media picks apart Nadia's body, her clothing, her facial expressions (the title perhaps reflecting what feminist Germaine Greer denounced as patriarchy's need for the smiles of its victims as proof of their compliance), what she eats, and what she says.

Yet the fictionalized Nadia is given a chance to speak back. Part of the novel follows the young gymnast's thoughts and gives her space to question and criticize the world that used and then discarded her. Despite this, perhaps to reflect the reality, many of the novel's other voices seem to speak over hers.

For her coach, Bela Karolyi, Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu and the media, so much is riding on the shoulders of these underfed, underaged, under-slept young gymnasts.

These disparate perspectives allow the novel to examine many issues, such as the horrendous way journalists speak to and about young women when it comes to their bodies and sexuality; the arsenal of abusive and coercive tactics used by some gymnastics coaches on girls as young as six; and how in this sport puberty is a career-ending disease, weight gain is a betrayal, and growing and changing bodies are to be feared.

Most women will have experienced the kind of objectification former American gymnast Julie DiCaro de-



## These young girls are celebrated, but in the blink of an eye, mourned as they hit puberty & their bodies become unbearably adult.

scribes as the norm in this sport on an episode of the feminist sports podcast *Burn it all Down*: “Little girls learn from a very young age that their bodies are not their own, that they are constantly manipulated and judged and worked on by other people. . . [I]t’s almost like people talk about your body as if it doesn’t belong to you.”

This is something Lafon drives home again and again: Nadia’s body is not her own. In fact, Nadia is not her own, nor is she alone in this. Lafon’s inclusion of a surprise raid of Nadia’s workplace by the Romanian secret police, during which women are forced to take pregnancy tests, helps make it clear that at any given moment, this alienation can be systematized, and that in Nadia’s world, this is not only a possibility, but a decree.

**A**geism is another central theme to *The Little Communist*. These young girls are celebrated, but in the blink of an eye, mourned as they hit puberty and their bodies become unbearably adult.

In the words of the current head coach of UCLA’s women gymnastics team, Valorie Kondos-Field, lamenting the apparent end of the era of the “little-girl gymnast” in *The Atlantic*: “Olga [Korbut] was a little pixie. It’s human nature to be attracted to [something] younger.”

This uneasy look at the prevalence of a somewhat pedophilic tint to women’s gymnastics and the many easily drawn parallels in Western pop culture, is incredibly revealing. The fetishization of young bodies that is so taboo in the rest of the culture is allowed in this very specific context, and with the way these young athletes are taught to let others use their bodies, there is a sense that their vulnerability is magnified to a dangerous degree.

The recent charges against USA gymnastics doctor, Larry Nassar, on sexual assault charges, and the fact that the athletes, all between the ages of 10 and 15 at the time of the assaults, had tried to report him for many years before they were taken seriously, tells us a lot about the kind of environment this kind of mentality can foster.

Besides these overarching feminist themes, the novel also follows the parallels that can be found in the political context of the time. Lafon, French-born, but was raised in Romania, so her narrator’s fictional correspondence with Comaneci provides some contrast to an often unforgiving gaze, reminding us that Romania in the 1970s and ‘80s was, in some ways, not that exceptional.

After all, as Lafon’s fictional Comaneci protests, gymnasts are sold as products in the West as well, French coaches inject their young gymnasts with cortisone, too, and her coach Karolyi’s manipulations were just his way of breaking through into the capitalist spectacle of the Olympic spotlight.

The narrative seems torn between two paths when it comes to depicting Romania under the dictatorship of Ceaucescu. Lafon does not hesitate to celebrate the resilience of Romanians, having Comaneci describe how starvation and cold created a necessary solidarity in the face of terrible oppression, yet the author of the memoir within the novel is often tempted to dismiss this kind of insight from Nadia in favor of a more “objective” account of the “facts,” which are generally far more critical of the regime and suspicious of Comaneci’s level of complicity with the Ceaucescu family.

Lafon’s book within a book is simply another version of a story that’s been told by many different parties, each with their own motives. However, a life story can be objectified much in the same way a body can, used and manipulated as an ends to a means, even by its subject.

Whose version of Nadia’s story should we believe? That told by the dictator trying to bring glory to a failing state? The glossy corporate advertising put forth by a sports franchise hoping to bring fame to the Olympic Games? The West trying to use Nadia and Ceaușescu to spit in the eye of the USSR?

**L**afon’s writing is enchanting and immersive, her style a confrontational realism with hints of magic and a captivating fable-izing or fabulizing of history. With Nadia, the media, coaches, judges and the public all getting a say, *The Little Communist*’s voices intersect and intertwine, making us engage with questions of power and coercion, the use of sports, sexuality and gender as political tools for governments of all stripes, and highlighting ageism in the particularly cruel way it affects women.

Whatever we choose to take away from this incredibly dense book, there is no question that Lafon is inviting us to ache at the cruelty of the gaze that slowly, surely, unrelenting pushes or maintains bodies onto the sidelines of desirability once their usefulness has been exploited.

She makes space for us to weep for “. . . a once-upon-a-time fairy now being gently pushed towards the exit, the one they no longer know what to call: was it a squirrel? Surely not. Possibly a bird, the albatross with “invasive limbs” that falls. . . on her back, her hands outstretched towards help that’s not coming, a disgraced body bursting out of itself.”

Marieke Bivar-Wikhammer is a writer, freelance translator, cashier, and member of l’Insoumise anarchist bookstore collective in Montreal.

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## REVIEW

# Tramp Printers: Freedom within wage work

**The Tramp Printers:**

**Forgotten Trails of the Travelling Typographers**

Charles Overbeck

Eberhart Press, 2017

**STEVE IZMA**

**T**his handsomely and mostly hand-produced book is a tribute to the craft of printing and of historical insight, both of which verge on extinction in the modern world.

Tramp printers, like journeymen in a guild, learned skills as apprentices and then took to the road. Travel and work under different conditions and with a variety of other craftspeople enhanced their skills, but also meant the freedom to leave a workplace whenever they got tired of it.

Charles Overbeck focuses mainly on 19th century typesetters working during the time when the craft reached its peak, prior to the mechanization that soon threatened it.

Many labour historians have noted how setting type by hand significantly affects literacy and knowledge. According to one person in the trade during these times: "I have met tramp printers who could recite Shakespeare, Wilde, Chaucer, Gibbon, the Rubiyat, Mohammed, Uncle Remus, Flavius Josephus, Isaiah, and Daniel Webster. They could edit and correct copy, spell, punctuate, parse, conjugate, and occasionally knew Latin, French, and Kant. They took competence for granted" and could "discuss politics, religion, art, music, history, and the literature of the most modern and ancient cultural subjects with erudition."

Although Overbeck doesn't mention him, the early anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon learned how to set type in the 1820s in rural France. Proudhon wrote "I still remember with delight the great day when my composing stick became for me the symbol and instrument of my freedom." His skill as

a proofreader—reading type in reverse, especially Latin—exposed him to ideas far outside the universe of his peasant background. It also gave Proudhon the mobility to find work and become politically active in Paris.

The lifestyles of tramp printers resemble the more familiar stories of Depression-era hobos. Journeymen typesetters and printers hopped the trains and avoided spending money. Overbeck quotes an early 20th century journalist: "Without exception, these [tramps] were capable of earning good incomes and without exception they were chronically destitute." The book's numerous anecdotes about compulsive drinking bear this out.

## TYPESETTING AND UNIONS

Overbeck frequently points out the connection between pride of craft and solidarity among printers, manifested in events like the first successful post-independence labor strike in the U.S., organized by printers in Philadelphia in 1786.

He describes the success of the International Typographers Union (ITU) in controlling hiring and firing practices in the industry and also their substantial influence over the introduction of any kind of technology negatively affecting workers.

Few other North American unions have achieved this power so extensively.

The union card carried by a travelling typesetter both certified their skills and enhanced their autonomy. Once a particular newspaper or publishing deadline was met or the often wretched chemical environment of the print shop got to them, they could move on.

But the internal contradictions of running a worker-oriented institution with business methods ultimately made the ITU vulnerable to the de-skilling of workers that resulted from massive amounts of capital investment in mid-20th century printing technology. As a result, the union crashed spectacularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Overbeck presents this rapid decline from the point of view of the last of the tramp typographers, even those who managed to merge their traditional knowledge with the new computerized systems.

## WOMEN TYPOGRAPHERS

Very few obviously female names appear in the book's appendix of known tramp printers, but Overbeck has collected enough information about women printers to devote a chapter to them. In it, he gives numerous examples of the sexism





**"Big Marie" Evans, indignant at being asked by a foreman what kind of work she could do. She "poked him a couple of times in the shoulder and said 'I can do anything a goddamn man can do except piss in a bottle.'"**

within print shops, a habit of both employers and male union members, but shows how determinedly women persisted in the trade. As is typical in capitalist enterprises, printing firms often exploited women as lower-waged substitutes for union members and, typical to unions in their early history, most labor organizations wouldn't accept women into their ranks.

Clearly, though, skills and efficiency weren't an issue: "During the gold rush, a swift-fingered young woman named Olive Miner set tremendous amounts of type and earned an impressive income. . . She was twelve years old."

Other evidence indicates that women's participation in the trade was very high, even far outnumbering men during periods like the Civil War, but since the work culture and chauvinist attitudes in the industry prevented them from entering apprenticeship programs, their wages were under constant downward pressure. After forming their own union, women were finally allowed into the ITU in 1869.

Once they had union cards, women could more practically go on the road with an autonomy similar (although never fully equal) to what men had experienced for centuries. And well into the 20th century they frequently needed to prove their abilities, despite possession of a union card. Overbeck quotes "Big Marie" Evans, indignant at being asked by a foreman what kind of work she could do. She "poked him a couple of times in the shoulder and said 'I can do anything a goddamn man can do except piss in a bottle.'"

## TECHNOLOGY VS. CRAFT

As technology continues to interrupt human creativity, much can be learned from the changes in the culture and craft of the printing trades. My own experience as a typographer began in 1971, at the advent of relatively inexpensive computerized phototypesetters, devices affordable by print shops that freed them from dependency on the large, specialized, and unionized typesetting firms.

Initially, I knew nothing about typography, yet these machines allowed me to produce material good enough for the printing standards of the time. In other words, the new technology flooded the market with inferior-quality publications. Lack of attention to proper hyphenation and word spacing, among other typographical values, became normal. It took me twenty years to realize my ignorance of the 500-year-old craft.

The introduction of desktop publishing in the 1980s dealt the craft of typography a deadly blow. Mergenthaler-Linotype, frequently mentioned as a technological interloper in Overbeck's account and by 1980 the major industry player, made a Mephistophelian pact with two newcomers: Adobe

Systems, which provided a software system (PostScript) destined to monopolize the market, and Apple Computers, the definitely junior partner who provided very cheap hardware for inputting the text.

The Mac was a big hit in art schools, not only as a tool for producing electronic drawings, but also as a way to earn money by typesetting and producing other graphic work on the side. This cheap labour force soon put most skilled typographers out of work.

Today typography's dominant paradigm matches that of the advertising industry: form over function. Desktop publishers are no longer proofreaders, so the aesthetics of appearance presides over the function of readability.

In the 1970s our highly politicized worker-owned and controlled typesetting shop in southern Ontario took the (somewhat equally deficient) opposite attitude: we paid more attention to the content of our work, rather than to traditional typographical standards, with results that sometimes make me shudder when I look back.

Nonetheless, I'm proud that we managed to actually publish what we did in an era when freedom of the press belonged only to those who owned one.

At the very least, our attempts to use this freedom to express our critiques of capitalism descend from the values of creativity and autonomy among tramp printers that Overbeck has so eloquently described.

Steve Izma is a typographer and programmer in Kitchener, Ontario.



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## REVIEW

## PUNK &amp; ANARCHY



***Ethics, Politics, and Anarcho Punk Identifications: Punk and Anarchy in Philadelphia***

Edward Anthony Avery-Natale  
Lexington Books, 2016, 235 pgs.

## RUHE

**L**ike many anarchists who came of age in the 1990s, my first exposure to anarchism came through the punk scene. A friend gave me a cassette tape full of classic punk bands as part of an effort to satisfy my ever expanding interest in punk.

Among the music was the entirety of the English anarchist punk band Crass' 1981 album, "Penis Envy." I was blown away by its deconstruction of gender and assault on patriarchy.

As a result, I explored other bands and through the overlapping circles of punk and anarchism and after a series serendipitous encounters (reading about anarchist organizations in album inserts, hearing about protests at shows, learning about political prisoners through punk zines, picking up anarchist newspapers at shows, etc.), I eventually became involved in the larger anarchist milieu in the United States.

Reflecting back on those years and having conversations with many friends about these topics, my story isn't particularly

unique, some variation of it happened for many in my generation. Punk—for whatever its flaws are—was a gateway through which many people were exposed to anarchist ideas.

Therefore, I was eager to read *Ethics, Politics, and Anarcho-Punk Identification*, in hopes that it would offer new insights into the role of punk within anarchism.

It is focused on one city, Philadelphia, but because punk is a global DIY movement, the discussion is relevant to the history of punk as a whole. The focus was particularly interesting as Philadelphia had a robust anarcho-punk community in the late 1990s and early 2000s. While I have never been to that city, word of what was happening there circulated through the largely pre-internet punk networks of touring bands, zines, and train riding travelers, which made me even more excited about Avery-Natale's book.

The Screamers on stage. LA electro-punk band founded in Los Angeles in 1975.

The text does a good job of giving an overview of the scene in Philadelphia. The author uses their own experiences as an anarchist and punk to ground their analysis which is in turn based on numerous interviews with long-term participants in the scene.

Everyone interviewed identifies as both anarchist and punk. The author tries to explain the basics of how the subculture works, but nonetheless, it's an analysis that would probably make the most sense to those who are familiar with the DIY scene.

Avery-Natale is primarily concerned with questions of identification and how anarcho-punks self-identify. It's an interesting discussion, focusing on how one reconciles being an anarchist in a non-anarchist world and how on a smaller scale, one reconciles being an anarchist in a predominately non-anarchist punk scene.

They spend a lot of time dissecting the term "anarcho-punk" and articulates the idea of dueling identities that alternate between being united and opposed to each other. Central to this discussion is the question of what exactly anarchism means to anarcho-punks.

The book presents the idea of anarchism as somewhat of an ethical compass or benchmark that one aspires towards, based on both what the interviewees say and the author's analysis. Based on the interviews, the politics of the scene are represented as being skeptical of the possibility of an anarchist future and reformist in nature.

Many interviewees quoted express support for various government social welfare programs and argue that the process of reforming the state is an acceptable alternative to revolution. The author gives weight to this line of thinking by leaning heavily on the work of Simon Critchley, an academic theorist who is likely more familiar to those within the university than participants in the anarchist milieu.

They fit right in with the stable of post-Marxist theorists also cited such as Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, Ernesto



## Central to this discussion is the question of what exactly anarchism means to anarcho-punks.

Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek. The occasional anarchist is referenced, but most are of the classical variety. Noam Chomsky is one of the few contemporary anarchists mentioned.

Much of the discussion in the book is framed through the lens of sociological analysis. Stepping back and evaluating things through an academic perspective can lend a certain amount of depth that can be helpful, but at times, it can also be limiting.

The author says they wrote the book in part as a way to “give back” to the anarcho-punk community, but it’s hard to

imagine that the text will have appeal beyond a narrow audience. It is full of relatively specialized academic language and theorists are routinely name dropped. While they do make attempts at times to explain briefly the concepts being invoked, it’s likely the more familiar one is ahead of time with those theorists, the more meaningful those comparisons will be.

Even with some familiarity, the discussion occasionally seems strikingly devoid of the passion which characterizes anarcho-punk. Moreover, many with experience in the scene would justifiably bristle at the fact that the book has an \$89.99 cover price.

Overall, this title ends up being only nominally interesting. Its discussion is too convoluted and seems more concerned with adhering to the norms of academia than making a contribution to either the punk or anarchist milieus.

The book frequently references the rightward drift of the punk scene over the past decade and the lessening of an anarchist presence within punk, as well as a stronger “anti-PC” vibe. Punk, as the author points out, is simultaneously local and global and the trend points towards a waning connection between radical politics and punk.

In light of that, this text seems even more irrelevant. Perhaps someone else will write one that properly captures the connection between anarchism and punk and the ways in which it inspired so many people into political activity.

Properly written and argued, it is a book that could have a lot to offer—unfortunately *Ethics, Politics, and Anarcho-Punk Identifications* is far from being such a title.

*Ruhe is an anarchist who still finds inspiration in punk.*

### Where Anarchism Meets Surrealism



**Birds of a Feather:  
Flights of the Anarcho-Surrealist Imagination**  
Ron Sakolsky  
Eberhardt Press, 2017 eberhardtpress.org

Anarchists of many tendencies have long fought for freedom of the individual and the realization of solidarity within communities. Surrealists, in and out of formal groupings, have had their own take on modern un-freedom and the potential for subverting it. In parallel, and sometimes together, anarchists and surrealists have fruitfully explored new avenues of revolt.

Yes, the afflictions of industrial civilization go far beyond the oppression and domination of politics and economics. Stunted imaginations, intimidated desires and repressed sensualities also block the roads to freedom.

Now comes Ron Sakolsky’s new attempt to discern and describe the anarcho-surrealist intersections, *Birds of a Feather: Flights of the Anarcho-Surrealist Imagination*, published by Eberhardt Press, 2017. Like all of Eberhardt’s work, this 52-page pamphlet is handsomely executed, featuring several engaging graphics.

Using the avian metaphor, Sakolsky introduces the anarchist and surrealist understandings thus: “The anarchist wing is the one that yearns to fly so high that it demands the impossible of the world, while the surrealist wing breaks the binary chains that imprison our minds in a sedentary dichotomy between dream and reality.”

This thought-provoking work deserves to be read by anarchists, surrealists, and all those planning to take flight in the direction of liberty.

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## REVIEW

# Anarchist Filmmakers, Video Tape Guerrillas & Digital Ninjas

***Breaking the Spell: A History of Anarchist Filmmakers, Video Tape Guerrillas and Digital Ninjas***

Chris Robé

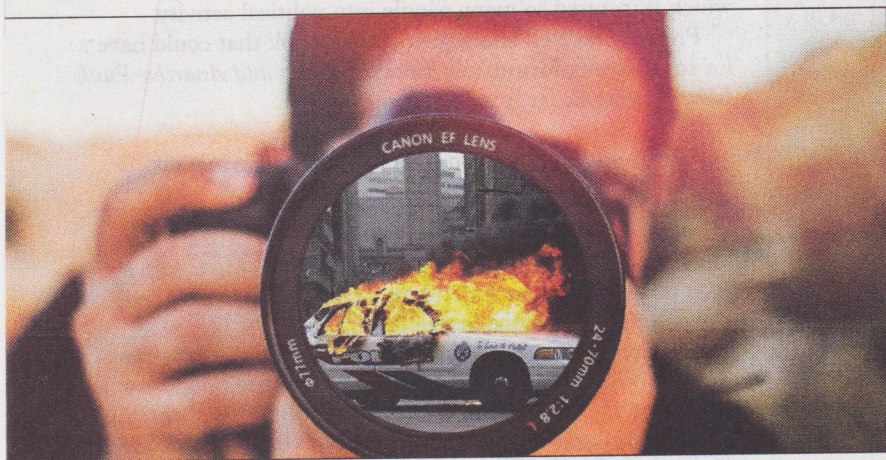
PM Press, 2017, 468 pages.

## FRANKLIN LÓPEZ

Reviewer's note: I agreed to write this review before being aware that almost an entire chapter is dedicated to an analysis of my video work and that of sub.Me-dia. It also includes some writing about my work with the Vancouver Media Co-op. I know Chris personally, and we've eaten tacos and drank beers together.

When I decided to destroy any chances at a film-making career, and to instead dedicate my life to producing videos that would hopefully propel people to destroy capitalism, well, there was no road map. There were only war stories from Indymedia folks who had been in the game for a few months.

Ten years earlier, when I was in film school in the US in the late 1980s (a total waste of time and money), there was no mention of the countless radical



filmmakers and film collectives. At that critical juncture in my life, I would have greatly benefited from a book like Chris Robé's *Breaking the Spell*.

The first thing that caught my eye was the title. *Breaking the Spell* is the name of a film about the 1999 protests that shutdown the WTO in Seattle directed by Tim Lewis and Tim Ream.

This film sent me down the treacherous (and fun!) road of anarchist film-making.

Aside from Richard Porton's *Film and the Anarchist Imagination* (an important book), not much publicly accessible writing about anarchist film-making exists. And while Porton's tome is a useful summary of anarchist cinema and representation of anarchists in film, *Breaking the Spell* goes a step further.

Robé not only gives us deep and thoughtful critiques and analysis of films, but discloses the nitty gritty of the processes that went into creating them.

Also, his history is not limited to self identified anarchist film-makers, but includes "anarchist-inflected" auteurs and collectives, giving us a much broader spectrum of radical films and videos made within the last 50 years.

The book kicks off with the history of Third Cinema, the Latin American film movement of the 1960s and '70s, which aimed to provoke people into action and favored underground viewings to theatrical screenings of their revolutionary cinema.

They attempted to de-commodify films by screening them freely, and emphasized that following the film, the audience would engage in discussions and debates.

By doing so, viewers ceased being passive spectators and became accomplices. The filmmakers wanted to erase their elitist position they often have within movements and place themselves on the same level of the people they were documenting.

They also pioneered the practice of guerrilla film-making, the practice of shooting low budget films or videos with minimal crews (sometimes the camera person is the crew) where location permits are usually not obtained, and scenes are shot quickly.

It's only appropriate that the book begins with Third Cinema. Their philosophical contributions to the practice of radical film-making can be seen throughout the last half of the 20th century whether or not other people using these practices were aware of their origins. I wasn't until a few years ago.

One interesting aspect of the book is how evolving technology in film, video, and later digital video facilitated the creation of radical and anarchist films.

*Breaking the Spell* recounts how the Sony Portapak, an early portable video camera and recording deck, allowed collectives like Videofreex, in New York state between 1969-1978, to widely distribute their timely "anarchist inflected" video reports to large audiences via the internet.

Robé does not simply glorify these facts, but also explores its contradictions as they pertain to radicals using these technologies. For example, the cost of the Portapak



## The lack of racialized minorities and women, as well as the gendered division of labor in radical media milieus are frequent themes in the book.

was about \$1,500 when it hit the market in the late 1960s, meaning that the technology was inaccessible to poor people wanting to tell their own stories. The individuals and collectives who were able to take advantage of this equipment were mostly composed of middle class white people.

The most important contribution the book makes is that it digs deeply into the organizational processes behind the production of these films. Robé interviewed dozens of filmmakers to find out how and why they made their films. Similar to his analysis of the technologies used, he gives us an honest look at the incongruities within their visions of equality and inclusion, and how things played out in practice.

The lack of racialized minorities and women, as well as the gendered division of labor in radical media milieus are frequent themes throughout the book.

For example, he describes how rampant sexism plagued the production of "Finally Got the News," a 1970 documentary about the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit's auto plants made in conjunction with New York Newsreel. Or, how the hacker-centric ethic in the early incarnation of Indymedia in the late 1990s failed to significantly include people of color in their productions.

Robé gives first hand accounts of the shortcomings and challenges that independent media initiatives have to endure to keep their operations alive.

He also brings us success stories from media initiatives led by the people during their struggles. Most notably, how Paper Tiger TV's non-hierarchical practices gave space for activists to produce and broadcast videos during the height of ACT-UP and the AIDS epidemic; the way Out of Your Backpack Media make videos by and for indigenous people in Arizona in the early 2000s, breaking the need for white activists to facilitate media creation; and Mobile Voices providing a platform for poor migrants to create media by using mobile phone technology in Los Angeles during the beginning of this century.

My biggest gripe, besides the heavy Marxist lens through which the book draws many of its critiques, is its use of an academic tone and language. This should not be a surprise, after all, Robé is a university professor. Like many anarchist and radical books, there are a lot of assumptions about prior knowledge that the reader possesses, making it at times an inaccessible read. This is unfortunate.

But this should not discourage anyone from picking it up. *Breaking the Spell* is a gift to anyone who makes or is interested in radical cinema. By examining the historical context in which the films were produced, by speaking to those making them, and by not pulling any punches in his criticisms of the

ways they are made, Robé gives us detailed picture of those who came before us.

In the closing paragraphs, Robé gives us suggestions to the way forward that harkens back to Third Cinema's vision:

"Improving the general aesthetic quality of activist video for those who have the time and resources to dedicate in cultivating it is an admirable goal. But to argue that such higher quality videos naturally lead to mass distribution or imply that professional looking video trumps other concerns like skills-sharing and collective organizing seems deeply problematic if not outright misguided."

Franklin López is an anarchist filmmaker from occupied Borikén (Puerto Rico.) He has produced hundreds of videos and short films under the subMedia.tv banner, a website he has curated since 2000. He is most well known for "It's the end of the world as we know it and I feel fine," subMedia's snarky web news/comedy series followed by thousands.

His work also includes mash-ups, music videos, and political documentaries. In 2011, Frank toured the world with his feature film, "END:CIV," presenting it in over 150 venues in 18 countries.

This year, subMedia released "Trouble," a monthly documentary series about radical movement organizing. Frank resides in Montréal. All his films are free at sub.Media.

As in past years, the *Fifth Estate* was well received at the 11th annual NYC Anarchist Book Fair in May. We shared our table with the support group for our imprisoned comrade, Marius Mason. We distributed a couple of hundred current issues, sold subscriptions, took orders for Fifth Estate t-shirts, received generous contributions for Marius, and signed people up for news of his support efforts.

The bad news is that the lists for subs, t-shirts, and Marius sign-up sheets were lost. This is terrible since those who ordered shirts and magazines, and signed up to support Marius will think they were ignored unless we can find them.

If you were one of these people who was expecting a magazine, t-shirt, or news about Marius Mason, please contact us, [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org).



Important  
Fifth Estate  
Folder Lost



# CIRA at Sixty

The International Center for Research on Anarchism archive is an important part of the memory of our movement

SYLVIE KASHDAN

**A**narchist solidarity can take many forms, including collecting books, pamphlets, and letters. Through such activity, comrades active in the world's anarchist archives are part of anchoring an important segment of the struggle for a libertarian and egalitarian world.

They are helping to maintain a living connection between present-day anarchist activities and that of yesterday's rebels whose values and goals continue to inspire.

One of the oldest projects still alive and thriving is the International Center for Research on Anarchism, often referred to as CIRA for its French acronym (Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme) currently located in Lausanne, Switzerland.

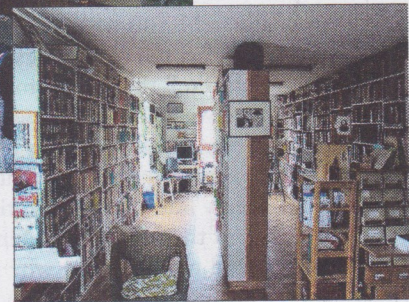
The means of preserving our history and maintaining continuity have changed over time. Starting in the 19th century, with the advent of the radical press and anarchist texts, one of the workers on a crew, for example painting the insides of buildings or in a cigar factory, would read aloud while others worked. Those doing the job pooled their wages to pay the reader.

Today, many people share texts online in digital archives that make our ideas and history available in several media for individual reading or listening, as well as for printing out for various purposes.

Infoshops for sharing anarchist his-



This modest little building in Lausanne, Switzerland with its simple sign is an archive that houses an extensive collection of anarchist literature from around the world.



tory and culture have been and remain common in local anarchist-oriented spaces, but projects aiming to collect and share material systematically on a long-term basis are more difficult to organize and maintain, and consequently there have not been many.

So this year's 60th anniversary of the CIRA anarchist library constitutes a truly significant achievement. The project has grown from a collection of personal libraries of a few anarchists to a catalogued archive of nearly 20,000 books, hundreds of periodicals, as well as pamphlets, leaflets, multi-media, and graphical works, including the *Fifth Estate* and other North American anarchist publications.

Started in 1957 in a single rented room in Geneva, CIRA now occupies its own building in Lausanne. Its growth has been made possible through the solidarity of anarchists worldwide.

Material comes from donations made by anarchists from many parts of the globe, and most of it is available throughout the world on loan or as copies to those who pay a small membership fee.

Unlike most academic archives, CIRA doesn't limit access to university professionals and recognized researchers. In contrast to most government-run libraries, its collection is not subject to the changing winds of political fashion and censorship.

Donations of both current and older anarchist materials are always welcome. CIRA's goal is and always has been to be a place where anarchists in one part of

the world can find out about anarchists in other parts in the present and past, helping to promote solidarity through current connections and memories of earlier movements.

CIRA's services also include publishing a yearly bulletin with articles in French, Spanish, Italian and English, along with listings of their acquisitions for the year. Several bulletins are available at no cost online at [cira.ch/bulletin-en](http://cira.ch/bulletin-en).

To learn more about this anarchist archive, visit their website at [cira.ch](http://cira.ch).

They welcome your publication at:  
CIRA, Avenue de Beaumont 24, 1012  
Lausanne, Switzerland.

Sylvie Kashdan lives in the Northwest and is a long-term friend of and participant in the *Fifth Estate* and other anarchist projects, including anarchist social centers and libraries.

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## "Detroit:" The Film More Horror Story Than History

**Detroit (2017)**

Director: Kathryn Bigelow  
143 min.

**WILLIAM R. BOYER**

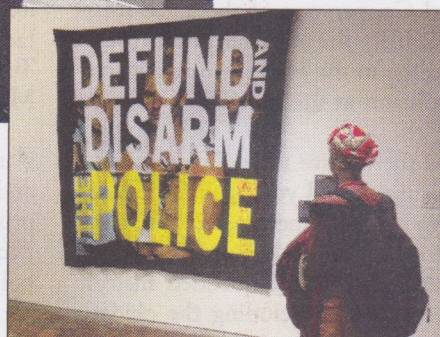
**T**he misnamed film "Detroit" is more about a triple slaying by police than the city's 1967 Rebellion. It first opened in the Motor City in July, and then nation-wide 50 years to the day of the final riot fatality, a firefighter electrocuted trying to put out one of the last of the smoldering fires.

Despite the expected fadeout to on-demand sofa screenings and high school social studies classes, this troubling reenactment of looting and burning amid murderous police repression deserves a viewing by all people, black and white, even if it's more horror story than historical study.

The cinematic efforts of director Kathryn Bigelow ("Zero Dark Thirty" and "Hurt Locker") and her screenwriter on both films, Mark Boal, both white, seem to say, we've visited your city, don't worry, black folks, we got this.

In interviews, Bigelow boasted of as much accuracy as humanly possible although almost all of the

**Cops murder  
3 teen-agers  
during the  
1967 Detroit  
Rebellion &  
get away with  
it.  
The film fails  
to place blame  
where it  
belongs.**



Mainstream museums are normally where officially approved art is displayed and dominant social themes reinforced. However, in this era, some have become the space where rebellious creativity is encouraged, prevailing ideas are challenged, and community discussions are encouraged.

This is the case with the four major museums in Detroit, The Charles Wright African American Museum, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Historical Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. All are featuring striking displays marking the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Detroit Rebellion.

Left, part of the Historical Museum's million-dollar exhibition, "Detroit 67: Perspectives," with this display of the Algiers Motel Massacre. There are Fifth Estates displayed in it.

Photo: Skip Schiel, [teeksaphoto.org](http://teeksaphoto.org), [skipschiel.wordpress.com](http://skipschiel.wordpress.com), [skipschiel@gmail.com](mailto:skipschiel@gmail.com)

Left, from MOCAD's "Sonic Rebellion: Music as Resistance," featuring both new art and historic artifacts from the era. Painting by Ben Hall: "Orwell in Burma" photo: P. Werbe.

film was shot in Massachusetts. This might have been true had there been local involvement and a greater recognition of systemic racism with scenes that stuck closer to its major uncredited source material, the disturbing, astonishing, *Algiers Motel Incident*, by John Hersey.

Bigelow did do some of her homework, even opening the film with an animated 350-year crash course on the nation's racism, and the mass black exodus from the South to Detroit's pot of automotive gold (which had severely eroded by 1967).

The animated summary quickly descends into the flashpoint of a vice squad raid that began the five days disturbance and police and National Guard killings. On July 23, 1967, 83 black revelers were arrested by a 99 percent white police force for the crime of celebrating a Vietnam veteran's safe return at a blind pig, an afterhours drinking spot.

As the film's first segment of action turns lethal, the second and longest act settles into one particular killing zone at the rundown Algiers Motel on the city's main drag.

Feverish mass rumors of ubiquitous sniper-fire rapidly energized the trigger-happy police and National Guard to discharge wild fusillades of gunfire which rained down on other units giving rise to the



## The film's position seems to say the entire tragedy can be traced to just a few bad apple pigs.

unfounded claim of mass armed black assaults. According to the extensive 1968 Kerner Commission study, which cited the cause of all 43 deaths, 37 were traced to police, security or National Guard troops.

A firefighter, Carl Smith, was felled by shots of unknown origin, and Jack Syndor was shot to death after firing his revolver at police from his third story window, giving rise to the heavily-loaded term, sniper, which became the shoot-to-kill rallying cry for everyone in uniform.

At the Algiers, the green light to kill reached a brutal extreme. In the movie's pivotal scene, the filmmakers manufacture an additional reason for a wave of police ferocity by having the first fatality, Carl Cooper, one of the three teenagers killed by the cops, repeatedly fire a starter pistol from a second-story window. According to the Hersey book, a starter pistol sound may have been heard at the motel, but the fake gun was never found.

This artistic license eases the motive for police methodically rounding up and torturing several young, unarmed African American men and two white women inside the motel. While not rationalizing the execution-style murders of three defenseless teen-agers, it further reduces imbedded historic racism into one insufferable incident, including the obvious hysteria of white women with black men as a chilling pretext for the slaughter.

**H**ere the accusation of torture porn against Bigelow and Boal seems appropriate, for like most pornography there is little or no character development before the actors mechanically draw out the basic sadistic plot as Cooper's corpse lies nearby. Like other Bigelow films, she uses a cinema verite style with a hand-held camera in a type of realism most effectively utilized in Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966, coincidentally titled, "The Battle of Algiers," about the Algerian uprising against the French.

The short third act of "Detroit," condenses the show trial of the three killer cops (their names changed for legal reasons), in a small town near the Michigan capital, after a hack prosecutor and change of venue motion, unexplained in the film, guaranteed an all-white jury and a ludicrously complete acquittal.

There is no happy feel-good ending or trite message of hope, yet there's also no critique of any institutionalized savagery, even as to why blind pigs existed as legitimate, often integrated alternatives to continued bar, club, and restaurant segregation. The film's position seems to say the entire tragedy can be traced to just a few bad apple pigs.

The most expensive medium has always been way behind the times

in dealing with racism or how capitalism has always profited from such inequity. The origin of the modern feature film, D.W. Griffith's silent "Birth of a Nation" (1915), exalted the Ku Klux Klan. President Woodrow Wilson conducted screenings at the White House believing the new form portrayed a favorably accurate view of American history.

Hollywood's white monopoly would remain effectively silent on bigotry for much of the last century, with notable Sidney Poitier exceptions from the 1950s and decades later with the determined talent of a few black directors, most remarkably Spike Lee. After the critical and commercial success of "12 Years a Slave" (2013), movies about racism became fashionable, with major financing belatedly backing films about Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Martin Luther King, the Nat Turner slave revolt, and even the obscure, anti-confederate Mississippi uprising, "Free State of Jones" (2015).

What sets Bigelow's film apart is its immediacy with clear, if unstated, parallels to today's Black Lives Matter movement and some subtle self-awareness over the difficulty in even approaching the subject matter. She warrants some praise, especially as a white director kicking in one revolving door of police-led barbarism.

**I** was fortunate to view the film in Detroit's Cass Corridor with an unusual talkback session afterwards. About a hundred audience members remained, collectively detoxing what they just witnessed, with the majority being older African Americans sharing some intense memories of the riots. Towards the end of the spirited community discussion, I spoke up about the necessity for whites in particular to avoid the temptation of letting this important history fade into fleeting museum exhibits.

While white guilt should not be a reason for seeing such art, white privilege should not give whites a free pass to skip the movie. For white audiences, the real life discomforts of racial injustice are too easily avoidable, even in the most segregated city in the country where the urban population remains 82 percent African American after several decade-long stages of white flight to its surrounding geographic donut.

If "Detroit" does nothing but motivate people to read Hersey's *Algiers Motel Incident*, while compelling interracial audiences to talk more to each other, than that's a start worth commencing.

William R. Boyer, FE contributor since 1985, teaches Civil Rights at an urban high school just north of Detroit. For 18 years he's usually been the only white person in the overcrowded, underfunded classroom.







photo: Dennis Fox dennisfoxphoto.com

# Reality Wars: Notes on the homicidal state

JACK BRATICH

**I**t is required now to bemoan the fact that the current US President is both a producer and product of Reality TV. Indeed, “reality,” “realty,” and “royalty” are all linked etymologically.

The real-estate tycoon, then, Reality TV boss, now completes the triumvirate by taking on a state executive role by treating it as his own monarchical sovereign seat. Instead of addressing this by seeking to re-establish correspondence-based truth via facts), we would be better off seeing reality as a terrain filled with metamorphosis machines, with subjectivities made and destroyed. We can begin an account of these reality wars by assessing the menagerie of alt-right and neo-fascist street actors emboldened by his victory.

Some have rightly noted that trump’s street “army” emerged from troll-based online cultures, as when some sharp tongued anti-fascists during a protest yelled “Go back to 4chan!” These mutants also have other, older, cultural references. Roman Gladiators, Spartan fighters, medieval knights, and nazi troopers are all re-mixed into the desperately awkward ganglings that gather in the streets. The result: a cosplay assembly for fans of ruined empires.

**T**he genre of the right wing rallies is one familiar to their leader: entertainment wrestling. These fans were weaned on the World Wide Wrestling’s ironic crowd love, founded on the dynamic of costumed reality. Wrestling was the training ground for those leaving reality-based communities.

An early post-truth populist moment was found in those mediated stadiums, locker rooms, and homes. DT himself became a Hall of Famer in this world in 2013 (after the infamous “Hair vs. Hair” match in 2007’s WrestleMania XXIII where he, in a simulation of archaic sovereign rituals, shaved WWE CEO Vince McMahon bald).

When ElectionMania 2016 became the main event, the 18-30-year-old voters had already spent their entire lives in a post-truth world staged first by the Wrestling Boom of the late 1980s, then enhanced by 21st century Reality TV, and finally augmented by online meme magic strategies.

It’s not that they grew up in an era of fakeness, but rather one in which truth/falsity stayed backstage in favor of other affective investments. Observers have wondered about the authentic conviction of these alt-right actors, noting their ironic postures.

Are all of them ideologically driven adherents? Or, are those that have genuine faith bolstered by a coterie of last-stand costumers, whose only attachment is to the transgressive feels belonging to the competitive anti-PC troll? Are these Lost Boys with mock macho posturings? Do they drink milk publicly as a bold display of white supremacy or as signals that they miss their mommies (while parading their misogyny)?

This carnivalesque moment would be laughable if the stakes weren’t life or death. The wrestling ring might be in the streets, but this time the blood is real, as evidenced in Charlottesville in August 2017.

Trumpist reality re-enactors are infused with a fascist-like will-to-death. When Trump, visiting Poland earlier that summer, asserted “the fundamental question of our time is whether the West has the will to survive,” he was beginning, in inverse form, to announce this self-immolation.

**F**or all the talk of “the West’s” need for preservation by Proud Boys and their Proud Papa, the suicidal impulse among these failed Empire fans dominates. Steve “Walking Dead” Bannon calls for a deconstructive approach to the state, which means dismantling any biopolitical infrastructure while augmenting the death-making police and military machines. Masculine pissing contests on the world stage threaten to put the NK and the US back into nukes.

Commentators note that 4chan is a community that jokes about its self-destructive drives while encouraging others to kill themselves. Trump fans revel in the glories of ruins so as to dramatize their individual downslides. Since their future is dead, these teens- and twenty-somethings walk as ghosts and simulations not of victorious warriors, but of the defeated—staging a reality as necropolitical carnival.

We need not look at online cultures to see this self/other murderous dynamic. To wit: the increase in “domesticity terrorists”—those men who undertake patriarchal revenge and control killings. These networked “lone wolves” attack individuals (partners, exes, strangers), birth control centers, yoga classes, college campuses and other spaces where



women converge. Pick-up artists pick up guns when their “artistry” is rejected.

Mass shooters (almost always men) don’t have the decency to just off themselves—they demand that others join them. Trump’s MAGA death cult is a collective version of these “homi-suicides.”

We can trace this as far back as the Great Depression whose iconic image depicts lone men jumping out of windows, while we know that unemployed men also forced their families to join them in the abyss. Whereas DT and the right crow on about Muslim honor killings, domestic honor killings (where murdering women is seen as a form of revenge against dishonoring the man’s own ego-reputation) and honor suicides-by-cop are routines of everyday misogyny, both monotheistic and secular.

**W**hat we’ve witnessed at this socio-cultural level is now becoming a state-machine. Trump is the CEO of the homi-suicide state.

A long passage by Deleuze and Guattari describes it presciently: “When fascism builds itself a totalitarian State, it is not in the sense of a State army taking power, but of a war machine taking over the State. A bizarre remark by Virilio puts us on the trail: in fascism, the State is far less totalitarian than it is suicidal. There is in fascism a realized nihilism. Unlike the totalitarian State, which does its utmost to seal all possible lines of flight, fascism is constructed on an intense line of flight, which it transforms into a line of pure destruction and abolition. It is curious that from the very beginning the Nazis announced to Germany what they were bringing: at once wedding bells and death, including their own death, and the death of the Germans.”

With DT, this version of the fascist war machine is populated not by the sleek uniformity of Nazi regalia, but the comic bricolage of the league of historical reality wrestlers. Theirs is a nihilism dressed up as dead regimes, founded on a stony ambition: a final abolition without end, forming a political body indifferent to its own survival (planetary, especially). Frogs like Pepe live in swamps, too.

Some have called this “populism,” but this backlashing minority are the guardians of a patriarchy and white supremacy in decline. Despite the laughable attempts at neo-royalism (Exhibit A: the manospheric “Return of Kings”) they are not preservers of a powerful noble culture. They are both weak and dangerous, passionate defenders of servitude to ruins. Their final violent gasps are more a destruction of all during a collapse (but especially women and people of color).

In this Upside Down world, characterized by self-immolating death networks and techno-subjective ruination, at best, we are confronted with a necro-populism.

Our conventional political terminology needs to capture this process better. Some have called the rise of Trumpism an insurgent force in US politics. Given its trajectory and speed, it is more like a “downsurgency” in which decline accelerates rapidly.

**T**his downward vortex is cheered by some in their costumes and trolling indifference, while others operate on the more violent end of the necro-spectrum, creating a stochastic mass of killers (by gun, car, and other weapons of networked destruction). Not an uprising, but an accelerated and violent downsinking.

These reality wars are already underway, and the responses are crucial. No platform is a method of refusing the downsurgency public space, it forms a popular security against their vortex. Antifascist insurgencies also invent forms-of-life—imagining and implementing ways of being that counter the necrotic fantasies.

Community defense, collective security, communal forms-of-life: all that is life-affirming wages a different kind of reality war against the death-machines that seek total negation as their final act of sovereign shaping. Creating different kinds of abolition machines means thwarting their authoritarian versions of reality molding.

Reality wars are not fought on the terrain of knowledge and facts, where we act as spectator-participants to reaffirm authoritative venues for truth-making. We return to reality as subjective agents—creating worlds, shaping relations, making forms-of-life. In this reality, we revive a destituent and compositional power that anarchism knows so well.

Jack Z. Bratich is a zine librarian at ABC No Rio in New York City, and an associate professor in the journalism and media studies department at Rutgers University. His research applies autonomist social theory to such topics as reality television, social movement media, and the cultural politics of secrecy. His latest writing appears in *The Culture Jamming Reader* (NYU Press, 2017).





# Basque Country Squat

Continued from Page 21

infrastructure of much of the protests.

The exciting moments when police are beaten back and spaces are liberated are critical to any resistance, and we like photos of burning limos as much as anyone, but given our position in Errekaleor Bizirik, we would like to emphasize a slightly different set of activities. We don't want to forget that the destruction and police retreats are not inevitable, and that they are the results of long processes that are much less photogenic and memorable.

**T**he weeks following the electricity shut off were brutal. We worked 12 to 16 hour days, running from project to project; building solar showers one moment and giving a press interview the next.

Dozens of people spent uncountable hours contacting every collective in the region in order to build a network of support that can create the types of protests we are all hoping to see. We have had assemblies lasting five, six, and seven hours that sometimes went nowhere, and sometimes formulated our fundamental strategies of resistance.

We have become a hub for food recycling, going out every morning to collect unsellable food from small groceries, and cooking together for 150 people twice a day. We have done this all while caring for children, going to our unfortunately necessary jobs, and trying to find moments to calm our nerves.

There were two moments of public resistance that will undoubtedly become part of our historical legacy. When the pigs came to shut off our electricity in May, around one thousand friends showed up to help us resist their attack, skipping out on their jobs to stand in the rain for hours.

There was a human wall, residents chained to metal barricades, and inspiring slogans shouted from the crowd. However, there were also broken bones, bleeding faces, friends stuffed into police cars, and the sickening feeling of watching brutal authoritarians take over your home and destroy things that have cost your sweat and blood.

On June 3, we had a march that slowly wound throughout the city, with 13 different collectives arriving as columns of solidarity. We brought together over 10,000 people, with tractors parading the streets with local militant rappers and took over the city for hours. We greeted our friends as they entered the neighborhood with firecrackers and flags on the rooftops, with a surprise concert and theater performance. We had thousands of people spend the night with us to share in our struggle, our excitement, and our fear.

When your very home, life and community are under at-

tack, all these moments are like high-voltage electricity running through your body. At no point before, during, or after a successful eviction resistance can you feel safe. You never feel like you have really won; you are always on edge, waiting for the other police boot to fall.

One night that boot fell. A police car tried to enter the neighborhood at two in the morning, and as usual we told them they could not. These particular pigs apparently had grown tired of getting stopped and faced down each night, and got out of the car with their hands on their batons. A siren call woke the neighborhood, and in minutes there were over a hundred of us standing in the street, some with clubs and masks, others with children and pajamas.

The entire city police force showed up, over a dozen cars blocking our entrance with their sirens and lights blaring. Unsure of what to do, they sat there for hours hoping we would just go home. After two and a half hours they relented, turning around one by one and returning to the city. In the following days, an internal memo from the police chief was leaked banning the police from entering the neighborhood at night for their own safety.

Although we were giddy with pride to read the police chief's words, we cannot forget that this would never have happened without everything that came before it.

**W**e did not turn away the police simply by our efforts that night. We were only able to do it because of hundreds of hours of standing guard, weeks of mental preparation for physical confrontation, and a planned response to this type of situation.

We love videos of police running from protesters and windows getting smashed. But these things take work, work that is outside of the frame of a video camera. It is easy to be carried away in a type of riot fetishism that forgets the massive preparation and organization that was necessarily taking place in the background, and moreover, ignores the hospitalizations, the stress, the lack of sleep, and in the end, forgets why the battle is being fought in the first place.

Glossing over or leaving out the pain and experiences of failure involved in such struggles weakens us. Acknowledging and sharing those realities can make us stronger and better able to withstand whatever may come our way.

More about Errekaleor Bizirik resisting eviction and building our independent solar energy grid are at:

[itsgoingdown.org/basque-country-errekaleor-bizirik-threat-eviction](http://itsgoingdown.org/basque-country-errekaleor-bizirik-threat-eviction) and [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft:Errekaleor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft:Errekaleor)

To help any of the many squats that are facing a similar situation, please take a look at the following resources:

[en.squat.net/tag/eviction-threat](http://en.squat.net/tag/eviction-threat)

[theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=14589](http://theoccupiedtimes.org/?p=14589)

**We had thousands of people spend the night with us to share in our struggle, our excitement, and our fear.**



# Life is Not a Machine

PETER LAMBORN WILSON

I recently read an incredibly annoying article in a 2015 *New York Review of Books*. This liberal-policy-wonk and literary monthly is run by Secular Humanoids, i.e., people trained by universities in the humanities who worship science more than most scientists, who (having studied science) do not usually confuse it with theology.

The *NYRB* worships evolution, genuflecting at every mention of Darwin's name, and spitting at the very idea of shit-kicking lowbrow Xtians who might question His Holy Writ.

Whoever Tim Flannery may be (his last work was a travel book about the Pacific Ocean) he is qualified to pontificate on the Sacred Doctrine in a piece titled, "How You Consist of Trillions of Tiny Machines," a review of work in evolutionary biology. "We consist of trillions of electrochemical machines that somehow..." blab blab, and "as we contemplate the evolution and maintenance of this complexity, wonder grows to near incredulity."

But don't worry; we have Faith. It's "almost magical." Ribosomes "work like a pair of gears" with "tiny mechanistic operations." "Nanomachines... within the mitochondria are minute biological electrical motors that possess rotors, stators, and rotating catalytic beads"—like a Toyota or something.

It's "like a fairy tale, "but, of course, it isn't really *magic*, after all. We know better. Life is nothing but a meaningless accident—or as one of Flannery's authors puts it, "chance and contingencies." (Nano-machines from Mars somehow blew into Earth's primordial oceans, and hey, presto. Really.

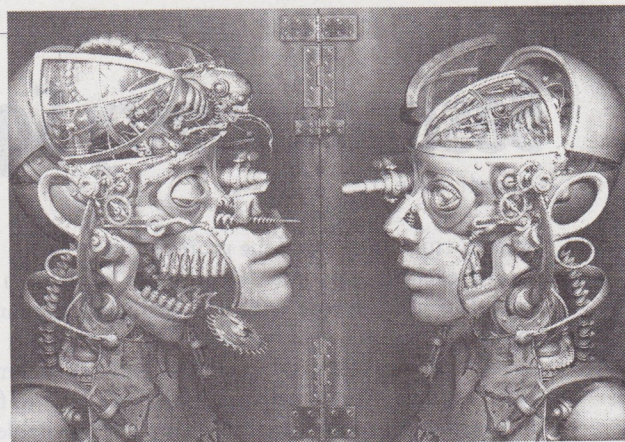
The Second Law of Thermodynamics is mysteriously bypassed, and lo, the little bitty machines produce germs, trees, dinosaurs and New York intellectuals.

It appears that some of us humans are so stupid that every time someone invents a new machine, we use it as a metaphor for life itself, and then come to believe that the metaphor is literally factual. As soon as clocks were invented, certain Enlightened highbrows conceived of a "Clockwork Universe," all made of springs and gears, and devoid of soul or any *élan vital*.

*L'homme machine* was now seen not as the divine microcosm but as an automaton, or—as we would say—a robot or android. Steam engines were invented, and psychoanalysis suddenly revealed the hitherto-unguessed fact that repression constitutes the energy-source of "Civilization (and its discontents)."

Other savants contemplated electricity and internal combustion and concluded that humans are not conscious beings but "behavioral" machines (except for the behavioral scientists themselves, I guess, who must've been at least conscious enough to realize this shattering truth). Nothing but, nothing but... machines.

As soon as the computer is invented, naturally the universe



becomes—a computer. The human brain is a computer, and the universe is nothing but data, information. Soon computers will be more intelligent than humans because they can process more data than we poor meat-machines. We will die out, but computers will become immortal, fleshless, brilliant, shiny—like angels in a Gnostic Dualist Paradise of pure mentation, only without a god.

So, if we are already machines, and are going to be uploaded into even better machines, and if we are the measure of the Good—then machines are *ipso facto* Good. Technology occupies the niche, in effect, of the absent deity. Science cannot be questioned. If something can be invented it *must* be invented, because the mechanistic is by definition the truly moral.

If technology accidentally seems to cause problems (like say Hiroshima, Chernobyl, Fukushima, the Pacific Garbage Patch, the eradication of species, the pollution of watersheds, the end of the world) technology will solve these problems because it is "almost magic," almost—no, it is our Savior.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the first mad man, James Tilly Matthews, who believed himself to be a machine appeared (see Mike Jay's *The Air Loom Gang*, 2003) and was incarcerated in London's Bedlam psychiatric hospital. I remember a big sob story, maybe in *Life* magazine, when I was a kid, about a boy who was locked up because he thought he was a robot. Nowadays, that kid could be writing for the *NYRB* and no one would blink an eye.

Now, we are all machines—"almost incredible!"—but true. Life? Bah, our machines will live for us. No, wait—we are our machines. "Trillions of tiny machines" in a clockwork universe. Let us leave flesh behind at last. Let us return to Mars, abandon Earth to its pollution and death-rays.

*L'homme-machine—c'est nous.*

Peter Lamborn Wilson is the author of countless books, tracts, rants, and articles, many of which have appeared in the Fifth Estate over the years. Several are included in three recent books from Ardent Press. [ArdentPress.org](http://ArdentPress.org).

Also, *Heresies: Anarchist Memoirs, Anarchist Art* (Autonomedia 2016) features a series of new essays, some which are autobiographical. Peter lives and writes in Upstate New York.



# The Hurricane

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE

"We are the birds of the coming storm."

—August Spies, [Haymarket Martyr]

The tide is out, the wind blows off the shore;  
Bare burn the white sands in the scorching sun;  
The sea complains, but its great voice is low.

Bitter thy woes, O People,  
And the burden  
Hardly to be borne!  
Wearily grows, O People,  
All the aching  
Of thy pierced heart, bruised and torn  
But yet thy time is not,  
And low thy moaning.  
Desert thy sands!  
Not yet is thy breath hot,  
Vengefully blowing;  
It wafts o'er lifted hands.

The tide has turned; the vane veers slowly round;  
Slow clouds are sweeping o'er the blinding light;  
White crests curl on the sea, its voice grows deep.

Angry thy heart, O People,  
And its bleeding  
Fire-tipped with rising hate!  
Thy clasped hands part, O People,  
For thy praying  
Warmed not the desolate!

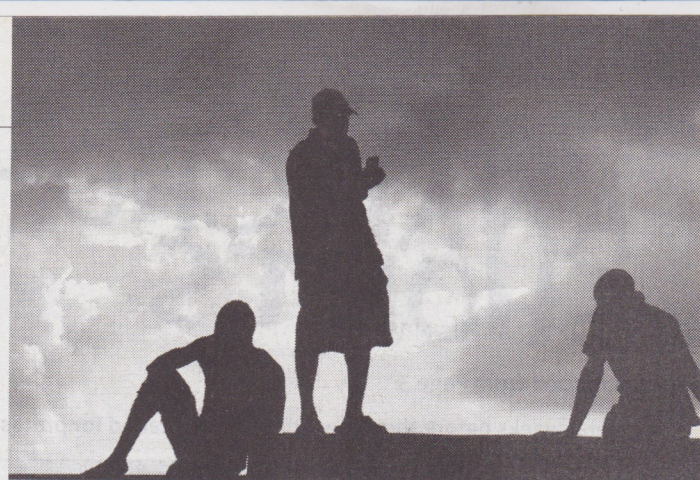
VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE (1866-1912)

As we face the storms (both literal and figurative) of 2017, we offer a poem by Voltairine De Cleyre, dedicated to the memory of the May 1886 Haymarket strikes and demonstrations in Chicago, and especially to the anarchists murdered for their beliefs by the state.

De Cleyre was born in 1866 into a poor family in Leslie, Michigan. Schooling at a Catholic convent convinced her to reject all religion, and she became a free thinker, dedicated not to God, but to humanity.

In 1886, De Cleyre began writing for a Michigan-based free thought weekly, *The Progressive Age*, and earned money by lecturing on the free thought circuit throughout the state.

The May 1886 Haymarket labor protests and the execution of the accused anarchists inspired her to learn about their ideas and become a lifelong anarchist.



God did not hear thy moan:  
Now it is swelling  
To a great drowning cry;  
A dark wind-cloud, a groan,  
Now backward veering  
From that deaf sky!

The tide flows in, the wind roars from the depths,  
The whirled-white sand heaps with the foam-white  
waves;  
Thundering the sea rolls o'er its shell-crunched wall!

Strong is thy rage, O People,  
In its fury  
Hurling thy tyrants down!  
Thou metest wage, O People.  
Very swiftly,  
Now that thy hate is grown:  
Thy time at last is come;  
Thou heapest anguish,  
Where thou thyself wert bare!  
No longer to thy dumb  
God clasped and kneeling,  
Thou answerest thine own prayer.

—Sea Isle City, N.J., August, 1889.

De Cleyre was deeply involved in the American anarchist movement from 1890 on, fighting for the emancipation of women, libertarian education, the struggle against the exploitation of labor, the need for self-liberation, and direct action against oppression. She helped foster connections between anarchists born in North America and poor Jewish immigrants by teaching them English.

During her short life (she died at 45) De Cleyre wrote many articles and poems, sketches and stories for radical journals, including *Lucifer*, *Free Society*, and *Mother Earth*. Nearly every year she took part in memorial meetings for the Haymarket anarchists, contributing moving speeches.

For the epigraph of her poem, "The Hurricane," De Cleyre quoted the prediction of one of the executed Haymarket anarchists, August Spies, that the rebels of today hold the promise of a better future for the world.



# ANARCHO-SHORTS

Continued from Page 3

several weeks before their execution articles called for protest strikes and boycotts.

Immediately following their official murder on August 23, 1927, there were massive outpourings of anger and grief in many cities.

Half a million people wearing black armbands rallied in New York's Union Square and very large protests were held in other U.S. cities and throughout the world.



Sacco and Vanzetti

In Paris, the U.S. embassy had to be surrounded by tanks to fend off an angry crowd of protesters. In London, a riot resulted in 40 injuries. The U.S. Consulate in Geneva was surrounded by a crowd of five thousand.

In Boston, a two-hour funeral procession was held to honor Sacco and Vanzetti. More than 200,000 lined the streets and thousands participated in the procession.

Sacco and Vanzetti were dedicated to a society without the state or capitalism, a classless society without the brutality of class domination. Remembering them is part of keeping that struggle alive. Autonomies.org offers a summary of the persecution of Sacco and Vanzetti and its place in history at [autonomies.org/ar/2017/08/for-sacco-and-vanzetti/](http://autonomies.org/ar/2017/08/for-sacco-and-vanzetti/).



**The Winter 2017 Fifth Estate** contained a fiction piece by MK Punky, "Bank Guard," which speculated what would happen if the protector of stored wealth just went home. It's now part of a collection, *How the Revolution Started: Essays and Impertinent*

*Thoughts*, by Michael Konik, his 11<sup>th</sup> book.

The short stories and essays by the author, who is also a jazz singer and improvisational comedian, examine what would be the result if everyone refused to carry out their assigned tasks that reproduce daily life. See [MichaelKonik.com](http://MichaelKonik.com).

**The Wilhelm Reich Documentary Film Project**—in production since 2015—needs a final crowdfunded push



Wilhelm Reich

to complete its post-production phase and prepare for distribution. Reich's 1933, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, and his other titles continue to provide an important understanding of the mass submission to authority of any ideology.

Reich's books were so threatening to the medical and political establishments that they were banned and burned by the Nazis in the 1930s, and the U.S. government in 1956. Reich died in a Federal penitentiary in 1957 following his refusal to stop circulating his works.

An updated trailer and how to contribute is at [indiegogo.com/projects/wilhelm-reich-documentary-final-post-production-film-history#/](http://indiegogo.com/projects/wilhelm-reich-documentary-final-post-production-film-history#/)

**There is a new website** celebrating the 200th birthday of Henry David Thoreau, The Thoreau Polymonophonic Journal Project, [thoreaupolymonophonicjournalproject.org](http://thoreaupolymonophonicjournalproject.org).

It allows visitors "to participate by recording their thoughtful readings from Thoreau's Journal (October 1837-November 1861) and sharing them online with other readers and listeners."

The project is made possible with the support of the Appalachian Springs Foundation, which also supports Mon Oncle D'Amérique Productions and the choreography of Clara Gibson Maxwell.

Maxwell's "Encuentro-Encuentro"—the video of her 2011 "site-responsive" and "multi-arts" ambulatory performance in an early 16th century Mexico City building was shown on September 14 in Montreal.

The video, a composition by Clara's longtime collaborator, the late jazz saxophonist and composer Ornette Coleman, follows showings in Paris, Rotterdam, Brussels, Göttingen, Guadalajara, Berlin, Loughborough University, Naples, Longueuil (Canada), and San Luis Potosí (Mexico).

Clara will present a new performance, integrating the words of Henry David Thoreau, during the November 23-24 Encuentro at The House of the First Printing Press in the Americas in Mexico City.

**The Turkish government has cracked down** on the anarchist *Meydan* magazine since the 2013 Taksim Square occupation. Repression has significantly worsened since the state of emergency decree after the 2016 purported coup.

Last year, a *Meydan* editor was imprisoned and this September three people distributing the magazine were also jailed.

The authoritarian Erdogan government objects to *Meydan's* support of the struggle in Rojava and the 2017 celebration of May Day, both of which it deems subversive.

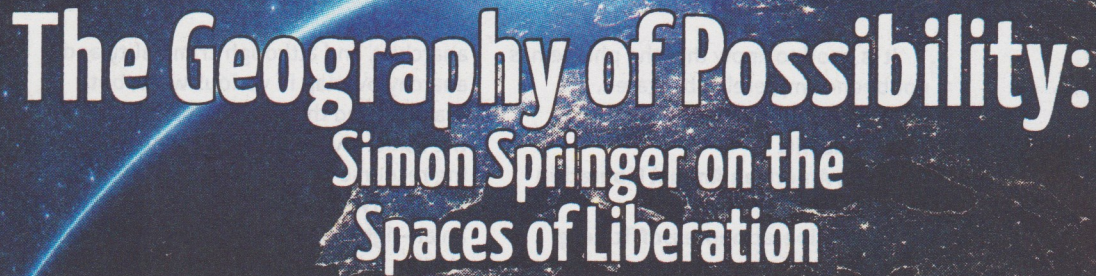
*Meydan* regularly updates on Facebook. [facebook.com/meydangazetesi](http://facebook.com/meydangazetesi) and @MeydanGazetesi

These comrades need our support.



Clara Gibson Maxwell





# The Geography of Possibility:

## Simon Springer on the Spaces of Liberation

on the rejection of organized violence as the major organizing force within society, and that consistent anarchism will have “an un-

### The Anarchist Roots of Geography: Toward Spatial Emancipation

Simon Springer  
University of Minnesota Press, 2016

#### JOHN CLARK

Anyone who wants evidence that anarchist geography is alive and well today need only read this book. The author, Simon Springer, is one of the most active anarchist intellectuals today. In 2016, he authored two books and edited five, mostly on anarchist themes, and he has written numerous articles, some technical, but many deeply immersed in contemporary struggles.

His lively polemic, “Fuck Neoliberalism,” has over 50,000 hits on one website alone.

The book’s subtitle is a good indication of its purpose. It is committed to the project of liberation of humanity and nature, and to overcoming all forms of domination. With great passion and eloquence, Springer calls for a return to geography’s “radical roots” in anarchist concepts, in which it is a mode of social and political engagement. Through such a geography of autonomy and solidarity, we “configure a radical political imagination that is capable of demanding the impossible.”

Springer relates anarchism to contemporary themes such as biopolitics and rhizomatic theory, but also looks back to the classical anarchist thinkers, showing the enduring value of their critique of hierarchy and domination. He deserves particular recognition for carrying on the legacy of the great French 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchist social geographer and political philosopher, Elisée Reclus.

Springer is inspired by Reclus’ communitarian anarchist project of a universal geography—in effect, a geography of solidarity—which he compares to Buddhism and Daoism’s ideas of the interconnectedness of all things.

He also follows Reclus in linking the aesthetic and the ethical, proclaiming that “beautiful is something that we already are.” For Springer, utopia is not a distant ideal, but is already present here and now. He echoes Reclus’ belief that “small loving and intelligent societies,” are crucial to profound social transformation, prefiguring the anarchist idea of the affinity group as basic to a free society.

Springer argues that “an ethic of non-violence” is at the core of anarchism. He observes that opposition to the state is based

wavering commitment to nonviolence and the absolute condemnation of war.” He thus carries on the tradition of anarcho-pacifists who have found inspiration in the lives and ideas of great figures such as Tolstoy, Thoreau, and Dorothy Day.

Springer also applies the critique of domination to the issue of colonialism. He points out that the project of the centralized state implied from the beginning a process of colonial expansion (conquest) from a center of power.

Springer writes that “to be ‘postcolonial’ in any meaningful sense requires that one be ‘poststatist’ or ‘anarchic,’” and look to non-statist traditions for inspiration. We must follow the “least alienated” and “most oppressed” peoples, learning from the traditional wisdom and contemporary revolutionary practice of indigenous movements such as the Zapatistas, who have a deep historically- and experientially-based understanding of the destructiveness of capitalism and the centralized state.

Finally, Springer applies this critique to urbanism, which he sees as deeply infected with hierarchical ideology and bias toward centers of power and wealth as models of the urban. In an anarchist urbanism, “the values embedded in public space are those with which the *demos* endows it.”

Public space becomes the space of self-determination by the free community. Springer contrasts the “Disneyfied” space of neoliberal capitalism, “devoid of geographic specificity,” with such a non-dominated space of anarchic community.

Springer concludes with the hopeful thought that “places wild and free” still exist. In such places, new possibilities for realization of beauty, goodness, freedom, and creativity are always present, ready to emerge. We need “a politics of possibility,” based on living an awakened, engaged life in such places, so that we ourselves “become the horizon.”

Springer is optimistic about such a politics for two reasons. First, there is a long, rich history of realizing such creative possibilities, extending from tribal societies to the great revolutions and recent communal experiments. Second, such emergence of possibilities is inherent in the very structure of reality.

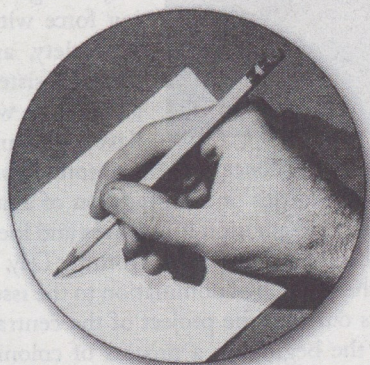
We live in a universe of freedom and creativity. We might even say that we are ourselves nature becoming free and self-creative.

John Clark lives in New Orleans and on Bayou La Terre in the coastal forest of the Gulf of Mexico. He has long been active in the radical ecology and communitarian anarchist movements, and currently works with Bayou Bridge Pipeline resistance. He is director of La Terre Institute for Community and Ecology.



## Letters

Continued from Page Two



ically examining issues and actions.

Everything certainly does not need to be re-examined. The fundamentals of our politics—revolutionary opposition to capitalism, the state, racism, sexism, homo- and transphobia on the social plane, and the imperial war machine which defends the empire and is the basis of the economy—these are not open questions.

Your letter, and the one last issue, has very little in it to challenge Dubey's opinions except to say, this is a closed subject. A discussion about the social consequences of borrowing, using, or appropriating the dress and hair styles of repressed and marginalized populations has many implications worthy of examination which could have been extended if the dialogue was fuller.

### A QUIBBLE

I would like to respectfully point out a minor quibble in your otherwise excellent article, "The Struggle to Get Back to Zero," (Summer 2017).

The assertion that the phrase, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common" was removed from the Preamble to the Constitution of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) union, is partially incorrect. It is present online and in all printed versions of the IWW Constitution and was never, at any time, removed.

That being said, you are correct insofar as the phrase having been removed from the *Industrial Worker* publication.

It is good to know that the phrase has not been completely abrogated.

**Will Hazlitt**  
**North American Animal Liberation**  
**Press Office**  
[animalliberationpressoffice.org](http://animalliberationpressoffice.org)

**Peter Werbe replies:** I'm glad that it remains in at least another format. I wrote in my article that this succinct phrase defining class relations had "disappeared from their publication where it was featured for over a hundred years."

### GET A GUN

As you know, you kick ass. But regarding, "An Anarchist Shot in Seattle," by CP and SM; in FE Summer 2017, I want to spout an opinion.

So we're clear. I'm a criminal, not an

anarchist, and although criminality and anarchy overlap in various ways, both practical and theoretical, they're not the same. My reasons for never seeking recourse to the pigs aren't identical to Hex's [who was gravely wounded by an alt-right shooter], but they are very similar. I reject these people's law's as a matter of both principle and preference, so I'm not gonna turn to them for help when something goes left on me.

I appreciate Hex not snitching and particularly in his keeping it consistent even insofar as concerned the racist jerk who shot him.

Where I part ways with Hex, and with CP and SM, is in the response to what was done to him. The litany of abuse and aggressions that the writers provide as context for the shooting is not a case for restorative justice (Hex's preference), but

## FE Roll-out at Bound Together Books

A roll-out of the Summer 2017 *Fifth Estate* at San Francisco's Bound Together Books on May 20 was a night of poetry, music, performance art, and *FE* writers reader their essays.

Organized by Bound Together events coordinator, Christopher Gallagher assisted by Bryan Tucker and Luis Chavez whose articles appeared in the issue, the event had a turn-out of 50-60 people.

Gallagher designed a poster which announced the event and recruited performers including Michael Steinberg, author of *I worked the Tenderloin*, Soto Zen Japanese Buddhist priests Zachary Smith and Michael McCord reading their poetry, incredible guitar and song work with sets from Colton Shier, lead singer of the Silk Road Truckers, and also Andy Mignano, Eileen Torrez. Mauricio Quezada. Christopher performed his poem, "Modern Fascism."

Tucker read from his *FE* article, "Virtuality & Sociopathy, and Chavez from "Music & Revolution."

The White Pee closed out the night in a truly fantastic fashion, invoking Thelonious Monk by way of Nikola Tesla's man cave.

Gallagher plans a similar event with each issue of the *Fifth Estate* at Bound Together: An Anarchist Collective Bookstore (its formal name), so look for notice of this one. Bound Together was founded in 1976 and is at 1369 Haight St.

Let us know if you'd like to sponsor a similar event in your city.



**FE writer, Luis Chavez plays sound sample at Bound Together Fifth Estate release.**



one for war. Period.

What we're talking about here isn't your activism at all, but rather your response to people trying to kill you.

I encourage the writers, the FE, and all other thinking people to acknowledge that fascism is not just some rival subculture like when we were kids and used to beat up Nazi skinheads if they try to come to our shows. Rather, it is a threat to your lives and those around you.

You should lawfully purchase a side arm, learn to use it, and get a concealed weapons permit and keep it on you in public. This way, the next time one of these people try to kill you like they did with Hex, you can kill them instead. Simple.

We are confronted with an enemy for whom gun possession and use are cultural imperatives, who feel not the least compunction about shooting us, and who is frequently supported by (or often even draws a paycheck from) the state.

This neo-fascist shit isn't a game or some kind of street theatre, and people need to respond in a fact-based, real-world manner.

In any event, I continue to appreciate Hex, CP, SM, and the rest of you for your struggle toward a better world, and extend my love and respect to you for your work.

**Leo Oladimu**  
US Penitentiary, Lewisburg  
Lewisburg, Penn.

**Fifth Estate responds:** The fascists have, indeed, amped up the level of violence, including not just fighting with antifas, but attacking liberal anti-Trump marchers in several cities. They need to be taken extremely seriously and defense preparations for public demonstrations are in order.

Our article, we hope, makes clear that restorative justice can only take place between people who share the same values. Obviously, fascists are excluded from that equation.

We have no objection to people possessing arms and knowing how to use them. It's good to have a deep toolbox, but carrying them at demonstrations is

something entirely different.

There's no reason to think that the accidents and rage moments that beset nonpolitical gun owners and carriers wouldn't also befall anarchists. At this point, the tactics groups of anarchists and others are developing at demonstrations seem sufficient.

#### TRAVEL FREELY

Regarding your "No Borders" issue of Summer 2016: Borders only mattered for taxation until the 20th Century. Anyone could travel anywhere. The only exception was quarantine for crew and passengers on diseased ships.

**J.Q. Adams**  
Chatham, N.Y.

#### MUTUAL AID

I have received every issue of your magazine since Spring 1988. I have been an anarchist since I turned 16 in 1982.

Please send me a stack of the Summer 2017 issue to give to very poor and ill

people. Some of these are victims that can't fight back.

I've heard that there are demos on the way in Spokane, but it's only the Democratic Party line of shit every time!

Everyone is so hooked on computers and cell phones.

I am on SSI, but I can send you \$50 on the first of the month as that is my pay day. I love the current issue!

**For anarchy at all costs,**  
**Chris Jones**  
Spokane, Wash.

**Fifth Estate response:** Your offer to do distro for our magazine and offer of financial support is well appreciated. This type of distribution, which leads to increased subscriptions and donations, is what guarantees our continuation.

However, \$50 must be a big hit for living on a SSI government stipend, so our appreciation of your mutual aid is even more appreciated.

## *The Golden Age of the Barbarians*

Continued from Page 23

periphery. Places of refuge where they accumulated over time became "shatter zones," as their linguistic and cultural complexity reflected that they were peopled by various pulses of refugees over an extended period.

\*\*\*

### A GOLDEN AGE?

There is, I believe, a long period, measured not in centuries but in millennia—between the earliest appearance of states and lasting until perhaps only four centuries ago—that might be called a "golden age for barbarians" and for non-state peoples in general.

For much of this long epoch, the political enclosure movement represented by the modern nation-state did not yet exist. Physical movement, flux, an open frontier, and mixed subsistence strategies were the hallmark of this entire period.

Even the exceptional and often short-lived empires of this long epoch (the Roman, Han, Ming, and in the New World the Mayan peer polities and the Inka) could not impede large-scale population movements in and out of their political orbit. Hundreds and hundreds of petty states formed, thrived briefly, and decomposed into their elementary social units of villages, lineages, or bands.

While the increase in population would have, by itself, encouraged more intensive subsistence strategies, the fragility of the state, its exposure to epidemics, and a large non-state periphery would not have allowed us to discern anything like state hegemony until, say, 1600 CE at the earliest.

James C. Scott is Sterling Professor of Political Science and codirector of the Agrarian Studies Program at Yale University. He lives in Durham, Conn. where he raises sheep.



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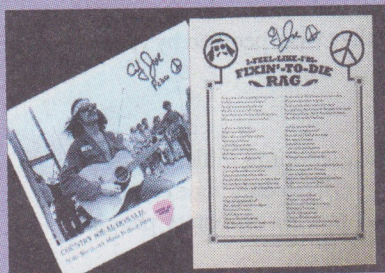


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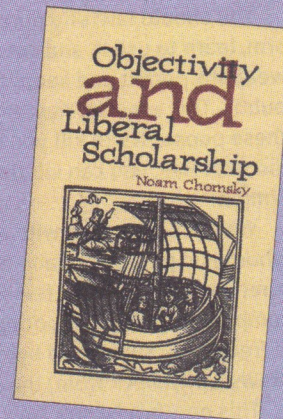
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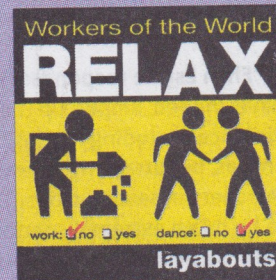
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